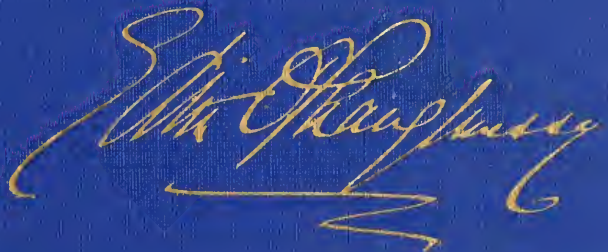
MY LORRAINE JOURNAL



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MY LORRAINE JOURNAL

Books by

EDITH O'SHAUGHNESSY

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HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK
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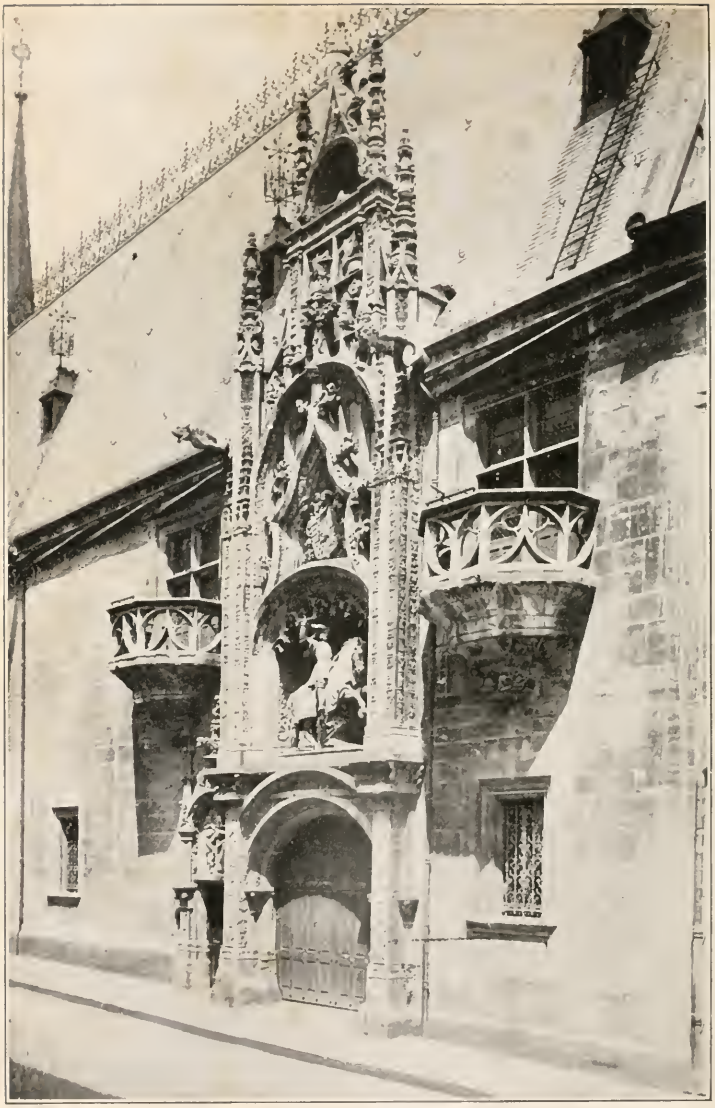


DUCAL PALACE, NANCY

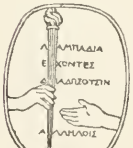
MY LORRAINE JOURNAL

by

EDITH O'SHAUGHNESSY
[MRS. NELSON O'SHAUGHNESSY]

AUTHOR OF
"A Diplomat's Wife in Mexico"
and "Diplomatic Days"

ILLUSTRATED



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON

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My Lorraine Journal

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Printed in the United States of America
Published September, 1918

K-S

To

Mrs. William H. Crocker

In memory of a lost battle
and in appreciation of
her work in Lorraine

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FOREWORD

It will be seen, by the first chapter, how fortuitous though inevitable was the writing of this little book, begun before the American troops came to France; yet it happens to concern that part of the war zone wherein our men are preparing themselves for battle, and which will be quickened with their blood.

The time has scarcely come to write of the world war; indeed, it is only between wars that one can write of them, when wisdom, with accompanying imagination, looks down the great perspectives; now men's utmost energies are concentrated upon deeds of passion performed in hope or in despair.

Oliver's *Ordeal by Battle* of 1915 remains the most scholarly and philosophic of the war books; Masefield's *Gallipoli* the most artistic. But even these, and the many, many others, give not so much a sense of inadequacy as of impossibility.

Letters from strong souls undergoing supreme emotions have emanated from the trenches or the air. We have mourned young perished singers: Rupert Brooke, Alan Seeger. But for the most part, and so it must be, war books are limited to the relation of personal deeds and sufferings, and descriptions of localities where they have taken place, colored more or less by the temperament of each—even as I, "*en passant par la Lorraine*," wrote these pages.

Edith Coues O'Shaughnessy.

33 rue de l'Université, Paris,
January 19, 1918.

PART I

MY LORRAINE JOURNAL

CHAPTER I

HOW ONE MAY HAPPEN TO GO TO THE FRONT

PARIS, *Thursday, June 7, 1917.*

EVEN personal events have their outriders, and this is how an unexpectant lady, still fiancée to Mexico, received from Destiny various indications that she was to go there where men, ten thousand upon ten thousand, lay down their lives *pro patria.* Like everything, it was simple when it had happened.

At the Foire Saint-Sulpice, where I was serving at the tea-stall, I met E. M. C., whom I thought in California. After greetings (we had not seen each other since the fatal month of October, 1916) she said to me:

"You must come down to Lunéville where I have a house, and visit the village of Vitrimont, that mother is rebuilding."

I answered: "My dear, I'm still tied to Mexico, and I can see my publishers frowning all the way across the ocean if the second much-promised, long-delayed book doesn't arrive. I oughtn't even to peep at anything else for the moment."

Then, tea victims beginning to crowd in, "business as usual" engaged us and we parted.

When I got home I found that Joseph Reinach, met

but once—Polybe of the delightful *Commentaires*—had sent me his brochure, *Le Village Reconstitué*. I still didn't hear the outriders galloping down the street.

In the evening I dined *chez Laurent* with Mr. C., known in Mexico. When I got there I found that his sister, Madame Saint-R. T., Présidente de La Renaissance des Foyers, was going into Lorraine, to Lunéville itself, the next day; conversation was almost entirely of the practical work to be done in the devastated districts, and the deeply engaging *philosophie de la guerre*, of how one had not only to rebuild villages, but to remake souls and lives.

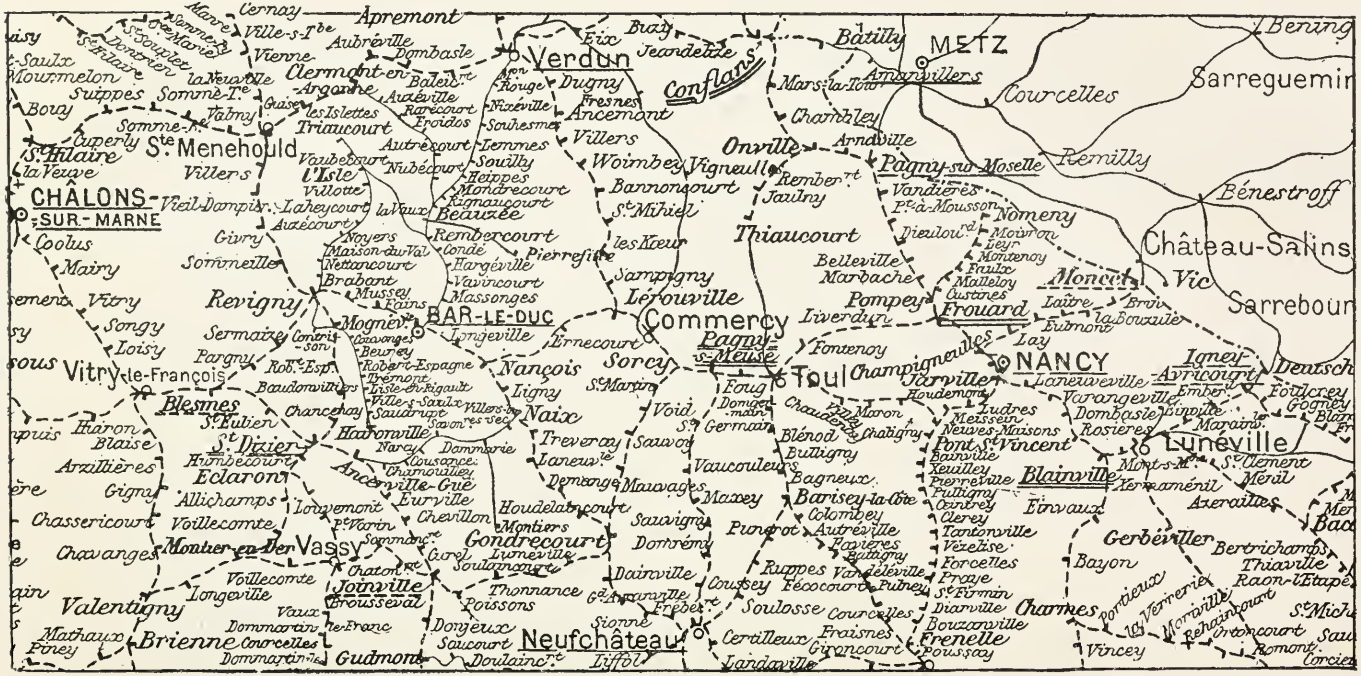
A quoi bon donner des chemises? Give tools and implements, or a brace of rabbits, that nature may take its course and the peasant can say, "Soon I will have a dozen rabbits, and twenty-five francs that I have earned."

Some one observed that it really would be the rabbits, however—it is any living, productive thing that is of account, beyond all else, in the dead and silent places of devastation, and gifts of twelve chickens and one cock are demanded rather even than shoes.

As we were pleasantly dining in the garden, and philosophizing sometimes with tears, sometimes smiles, a terrific thunder-storm broke over Paris, and we all crowded into the big central room, with piles of hastily torn-off, muddy table-linen. We sat talking, however, till they turned both ourselves and the lights out. As we parted, Madame Saint-R. T.'s last words were, "But try to come down to Lunéville."

I thought to myself that night, "Things are getting hot." I believe in signs from heaven, and signs from heaven are not to be neglected.

On Saturday, when E. M. stopped by for me to go again to the Foire, I said:


Verdun
Conflans
METZ
Sarreguemin
Courcelles
Remilly
Pagny-sur-Moselle
Onville
Vigneulles
Woimbey
Thiaucourt
Commercy
Pagny-s-Meuse
Toul
NANCY
Frouard
Pompey
Liverdun
Marbache
Belleville
Moncel
Vic
Château-Salins
Sarrebourg
Bénestroff
Lunéville
Blainville
Gerbéviller
Charmes
Neufchâteau
Frenelle
Vaucouleurs
Void
Naix
Bar-le-Duc
Revigny
Vitry-le-François
Blesmes
St. Dizier
Eclaron
Vassy
Joinville
Brienne
Valentigny
Gudmont
Dommartin
Doulaincourt
Tiffol
Landaville
Frebécourt
Coussey
Soulosse
Bainville
Ruppes
Domrémy
Maxey
Barisey-la-Côte
Void
Sauvoir
Vaucouleurs
Bagneux
Blénod
Pont-St-Vincent
Toul
Champigneulles
Jarville
Laneuveville
Varangeville
Dombasle
Maxéville
Nancy
Essey
Malzéville
Tomblaine
Villers-les-Nancy
Houdemont
Ludres
Meisseir
Neuves-Maisons
Rosières
Pulnoy
Frouard
Custines
Laxou
Maidières
Essey
Pont-à-Mousson
Dieulouard
Norroy
Atton
Arnaville
Mars-la-Tour
Amanvillers
Batilly
Jeandelize
Eix
Bras
Dugny
Fresnes
Ancemont
Villers
Souhesmes
Rarécourt
Froidos
Autrécourt
Nubécourt
Souilly
Heippes
Mondrecourt
Rignaucourt
Beauzée
Rembercourt
Pierrefitte
Hargéville
Vavincourt
Massonges
Mognéville
Longeville
Ernecourt
Sorcy
St. Maurice
Nançois
Trigny
Naix
Trevernay
Laneuville
Demange
Mauvages
Houdelaincourt
Montiers
Gondrecourt
Lisle-en-Rigault
Ville-sur-Saulx
Saudrupt
Savonnières
Hévilliers
Hévilliers
Robert-Espagne
Tremont
Baudonvilliers
Chancenay
Haironville
Nançois
Couvonges
Beurey
Pargny
Sermaize
Somme-Tourbe
Somme-Suippe
Suippes
Mourmelon
Ste. Menehould
St. Hilaire
Châlons-sur-Marne
Coolus
Mairy
Vitry
Songy
Loisy
Somme-Vesle
Cuperly
Bouy
Vraux
Jâlons
Soudé-Ste.
Soudé-Notre
Vienne
Clermont-en-Argonne
Baleycourt
Auzéville
Triaucourt
Les Islettes
Vaubecourt
Nubécourt
Souilly
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Mondrecourt
Rignaucourt
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Hévilliers
Haironville
Robert-Espagne
Tremont
Baudonvilliers
Chancenay
Pargny
Sermaize
Couvonges
Beurey

"I believe I *will* go to Lunéville. What does one do about papers?"

We straightway went to the Rue François Premier, not being in the *mañana* class, either of us, and found there a charming specimen of *jeunesse dorée*, intellectual, "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," but doing his bit. Shears for the cutting of red tape were liberally applied, and my papers were promised in an unprecedented three days.

As we "swept" out I said to E. M., "You don't think we were *too* strenuous?"

She said, "Oh, they are used to us now, though it was a thrilling moment when you ripped your photograph (such a photograph!) from the duplicate of your passport!"

The aforementioned charming specimen, M. de P., had said a photograph was essential; it was Saturday afternoon, the next day was Sunday, and for some unexplained reason photographers don't seem to work in France on Mondays, at least not in war-time.

It was about this time that E. M. said, in a *dégagé* way: "I am going down to Verdun with a friend. It's awfully difficult, and the women who have been there can be counted on one's fingers. I wish *you* could go, too."

I said, "That's out of the question." But I thought to myself, "We will see what Fate decides." It's a great thing to keep astride of her, anyway.

On account of Sunday coming in between, my papers could not be ready in time for me to leave with her on Tuesday (they have to be sent to the *Quartier-Général* to be stamped), but they were promised for Wednesday that I might start for Lunéville on Thursday. I went to see E. M. at her aunt's, the Princess P.'s, on Monday night for a few last words and injunctions. I found

her after passing through some lovely dove-gray rooms with priceless old portraits of Polish great, hanging on silvery walls, and rare bibelots and porcelains discreetly scattered on charming tables rising from gray carpetings. She greeted me by saying, "It's all arranged for you to go to Verdun, too."

"Verdun!" I cried. "Glory and sorrow of France!"

I didn't ask how, but thought of the harmonious working of chance that brings as many gifts as blows in its train.

Thursday, June 14th, 10.30 a.m.

We slipped out of the station, flooded with waves of blue-clad men, at eight o'clock, and since then there has been a constant stopping of the train in green, glade-like places to let troop-trains pass. A while ago I found myself looking out on a river, and a shiver went over me. It was the jade-colored, slow-flowing Marne.

White morning-glories are thick on every hedge, and wild roses such as grow in New England lanes, and there are many thistles, soft and magenta-colored; lindens, acacias, and poplars abound and hang delicately over the banks of the river.

Lying open on my lap is the *Revue de Paris* of June 1st, but I can't read even the beautiful "*Lettres d'un Officier Italien*"—(Giosué Borsi [1]), breathing a deep spirit of conformity to the will of God and showing the evolution that many an *intellectuel catholique* of his generation has gone through in Italy. In his dug-out were Dante, Homer, Ariosto, the Gospels, St. Augustine, Pascal, and *Le Manuel du Parfait Caporal et les Secours d'Urgence*. And he loved his mother and let her know it.

All along the route are villages and peaceful country houses, near the train, bowered in acacia and linden;

[1] Killed 10th November, 1915, at Zagora, at the head of his battalion.

elder-bushes are in full bloom, too, and we pass many green kitchen gardens. Women are shaking blankets out of windows, and looking at the train going to the front, thinking, who shall say what thoughts?

Later.

Big movement of troops is delaying us, and it has been a morning spent among emerald-green hills, pale, like Guatemalan or Bolivian emeralds, not like the deep-colored gems of the Rue de la Paix. Everywhere are patches of blue-clad men, marching down white roads between green fields melting into the blue sky at the point of the eyes' vision. Still others are bathing in the pale, warm Marne or resting on its banks. Trains go past loaded with battered autos, *camions* and guns coming from the front, or others with neatly covered, newly repaired machines of death, going out.

All were silent in the train at first. "*Méfiez-vous, les oreilles ennemies vous écoutent*" is the device placarded everywhere. In my coupé some one feeling slightly, very slightly, facetious, had rubbed out the first two letters of *oreilles*, changed the first "*e*" into an "*f*," so that it read, "*Méfiez-vous, les filles ennemies vous écoutent.*" The ruling passion strong in death!

We pass Epernay, whose little vine-planted hills had run red, before the treading out of its 1914 wine, with the blood of English and French heroes.

At last we began to talk, a dark-eyed colonel of infantry with the *Grand' Croix de la Légion d'Honneur* having reached down my bag for me.

It is a historic date for France and for ourselves.

The night before, General Pershing arrived in Paris, with his guerdon of help, mayhap salvation. All the newspapers had pictures of him and his staff, their reception at the station, the crowd before the Hôtel

Crillon. One officer told the story of the woman in the crowd who was so little that there wasn't the slightest chance of her seeing anything or anybody. When asked why she was there she answered, "*Mais j'aurai assisté,*" and that, it seems to me, is the epitome and epitaph of the generation whose fate it is to see with their eyes the world war.

In the Station, Châlons-sur-Marne, *2.30 p.m.*

Extreme heat. Train four hours late on account of the movement of troops. Wave after wave of horizon blue undulates through the station. They are lying about, standing about, sitting about—the *poilus*. Half hidden by their equipment, their countless bundles tied around their waists, slung on their shoulders, under their arms, they seem indescribably weary and dusty, turned toward the blazing front where the best they can hope is *la bonne blessure*—theirs not to reason why. Sometimes 30,000 pass through Châlons in a day.

Now it comes to me that our men—our fresh, eager, beautiful young men, such as I saw disembark at Vera Cruz—will pass through this same station to that same blazing front. . . .

By my window, on the siding, is passing an endless train of box-cars, with four horses in the ends of each car. Between the horses' forefeet, pale-blue groups of men are crowded; no room to lie, scarcely to sit—cramped, hot, with their eternal accoutrement. One bent group was playing cards, the horses' heads above them. But mostly they are looking out at people who are not called upon to die.

Later.

Pangs of hunger began to assail me as the train pulled out. I went into the dining-car and had a modest,

belated repast of *œufs sur le plat*, cheese and fruit. At the tables were groups of uniformed men talking in low voices of what had been and what might have been. As I looked out of the window, while waiting, my eyes fell upon the first band of prisoners I had seen—tall, stalwart men, wearing the round white cap with its band of red—at work on the roads, those veins and arteries of France.

An officer, once the most civilian of civilians, looking like the pictures of Alexandre Dumas *fils* on the covers of cheap editions of *La Dame aux Camélias*, with bushy hair parted on one side, mustache, and stubby Napoléon, broad face and twinkling eyes, pointed out Sermaize, the first of the devastated villages we passed, which has been rebuilt by the English Society of Friends. "Conscientious objectors" don't intend to let the sons of Mars do everything, but they can't keep pace with the destruction. In *Le Village Reconstitué* M. Reinach speaks of the ugliness of the models proposed to the victims, which pass understanding, and says that even the vocabulary of Huysmans would not suffice to give the least idea of them. What the peasant wants is "*mon village*," which doesn't at all resemble what the *commis voyageur en laideur* proposes.

REVIGNY, *4.30 p.m.*

I have seen the first black crosses in a green field bounded by clumps of poplar against the clear sky. Revigny is a mass of ruins, roofless houses, heaps of mortar, and endless quantities of blue-clad, heavily laden men coming and going in the station—the eternal waiting, waiting for transit. Revigny is on the road to Verdun, Alexandre Dumas *fils* told me. He gets out at Bar-le-Duc, which is now the point of departure to the fateful fortress. Groups of yellow Annamites are work,

ing at the roads. They are imported for that purpose, being of little use when the cannon sounds.

Awhile ago two young Breton under-officers, colonials, came into the compartment. They had been at school together and had not met for ten years until just now on the train. They watched together the shifting scenery; one was coming from a young wife, the other from a fiancée.

GONDRECOURT.

Two symmetrical fifteenth-century towers pierce a pale-blue sky. One of the young Bretons tells me that for some time the train has been making a great détour, as the straight line to Nancy would take it through Commercy, daily bombarded by the enemy.

PAGNY, *5.30 o'clock p.m.*

Here we pick up the Meuse—and there still follows us the pink-and-gray ribbon of willow-fringed canal that links the Marne to the Rhine, and which all day long has looked like the marble the Italians call *cipollino*. But I remember that its greenness has been but lately colored with a crimson dye.

TOUL (*where we thread up the Moselle*), *5.50*.

We have just passed Toul. Great barracks are near the station, and on the opposite hill is the fortress, high against the sky, bound to Verdun by an uninterrupted series of forts. It is a *place de guerre de première classe*. The Romans had an encampment here, and Vauban made the fortifications of his time.

And because the mind is not always held to the thing in view, even though it be of great moment, I thought how Toul was the town where Hilaire Belloc did his military service, "was in arms for his sins"; from here it was that he set out upon the "path to

Rome" in fulfilment of his vow. Other things laid long away in memory came to mind, and I was only jerked back as my eye was caught by a group of German prisoners being marched past the station, one soldier, with a pointed bayonet, in front of them and another behind.

And at Nancy we are to knit up the river Meurthe.

CHAPTER II

NANCY

NANCY, a dream of the eighteenth century, with the réveillé of twentieth-century guns.

We arrived at Nancy five hours late, at seven o'clock.

No sign of E. M., no sign of anything familiar. Fortunately I was flanked by Brittany, and a stout heart did the rest. When we found that the next train for Lunéville would leave at nine o'clock, I asked them to dine with me and take a little walk about the town. Our luggage—we were all traveling light, I with a handbag and flat straw valise, they with two iron helmets—was given to the *consigne* and, after my *sauf-conduit* had been stamped in three separate places, we departed.

The square before the station was surging with the usual pale-blue waves, and as we crossed it the odor of leather and tired feet and hot men was a good deal stronger than the linden scent. We passed a very banal statue of Thiers, *Libérateur du Territoire*, and some horrors of *art nouveau*. A construction with colored-glass windows and unnatural cupolas and gilding and mushy outlines protruded from a corner, and its name, for its sins, was Hôtel Excelsior. But we were searching for the celebrated Place Stanislas. After asking a passer-by, we were directed to a street whose name I have forgotten, and we started down its rather distinguished length of gray, well-built houses of another century,

PLACE STANISLAS, NANCY

many of them having the double Lorraine cross in red to indicate cellar accommodations, with the number they could shelter.

When, suddenly, we stepped into the Place Stanislas, I almost swooned with joy. I was in full eighteenth century, in the midst of one of its most perfect creations, with the low boom of the twentieth-century guns in the distance.

Quickly my spirit was ravished from the world of combat into the still, calm, beautiful world of art, within the enchantments of the *grilles* of Jean Lamour. A sensation sweet, satisfying, unfelt since the beginning of the war, invaded me. I gazed entranced upon that delicate tracery of wrought iron, like some rich guipure, at the four corners of the square of buildings, its lovely gilding reflecting a soft light; and, outlined against a heaven colored especially for them—pale blue, with threads of palest pink, and a hint of gray and yellow—were urns and torches and figures, half human, half divine, supporting them. The beautiful fountains in the corners were banked with sand-bags, but their contours were in harmony with the other *grilles*, and one was surmounted by an Amphitrite, the other by a Neptune. It was all a symbol of a state of mind, a flowering of feeling, to which had been vouchsafed a perfection of expression.

There is an Arc de Triomphe, put up by Stanislas at one end, in honor of his kingly son-in-law, in front of the Hôtel de Ville, and a statue of Stanislas himself in the middle, bearing the name "Stanislas," the date of 1831, and "*La Lorraine Reconnaissante.*" In looking about, my eye fell on the Restaurant Stanislas, *dans la note*, certainly, and I decided to dine there. We found that we had time to investigate a little further, and turned down by the café into a most lovely linden-scented square called Place de la Carrière. Through the

double lines of trees between the fountains at the farther end was visible an old palace, and the square was flanked by houses that courtiers only could have lived in. It all cried out, "Stay with me awhile." An old park was at one side, with trees planted *en quinconce* [1]—chestnuts, ash, trembling poplars—and everywhere was the penetrating fragrance of the lindens. It was so sweet and loosening under the shade, after the long hot day in the train, that the young officers began to talk, one of his fiancée waiting in *Les Landes*, the other of his wife of a year, seen only twice seven days. And then again we were silent, and under the flowering trees I was seized with a great longing for the beautiful and calm, for the arts and ways of Peace. It seemed to me I could not longer think of this, that, or the other "offensive," but that I must see before my eyes, hear with my ears, feel with my touch, the lovely, the melodic, the benign. *O bon Jésus!* Not of the battle-fields, not of *réformés*, of limbless, sightless men, not of starving, frightened children, not of black-robed women, not of lonely deaths, not of munition-factories. What *is* this world we are in?

I don't know how long we were silent, but at last one of the young men said, "We must think of the hour." Then came a glancing at wrist watches, rattling of identity disks, and we went back to the café and got a table by the window, where we could look out on the lovely, calm *ensemble* and the fading sky. The menu was brought; it was a meatless day, but with a snap of the eye the waiter recommended *œufs à la gelée*. We understood later, when we found, concealed in the bottom of each little dish under the egg, a thick, round piece of ham. Fried perch, new potatoes, salad, strawberries and cream, with the celebrated macarons of

[1] Planted so that any vista represents the Roman numeral V.

Nancy—*des Sœurs Macarons*, as the little piece of paper underneath each says—made a delicious menu. A certain *petit vin gris du pays* had been recommended us with another snap of the eye.

As we sat waiting, one of the officers exclaimed at a giant, lonely, priestly figure passing through the Place: "*Le voilà, l'aumônier du 52ème.*"

I said, "Do run after him and ask him for dinner, too."

He came back with the young man and we had a most enjoyable repast. The chaplain knew all the things about Nancy that we didn't. He was a huge, bearded man, who might have been with the hosts of Charlemagne, and was a native of Commercy, where Stanislas used to go with his court. The two Bretons were very Catholic and very royalist; when I remarked upon it, they said, simply, "Oh, we are all that way, *par là*," and they spoke names of great men born in Brittany, and the *aumôn er* told tales of near yesterdays surpassing those of the heroic age. The gayest of the Bretons, he who had not just left his young wife and his child unborn, began to sing, "*Voici un sône tout nouveau*," and suddenly it was a quarter before nine and we had time only for a dash to the station *d'une bonne allure militaire*, which left me breathless. The nine-o'clock train didn't, however, leave till ten, as it was waiting for the Paris train, which didn't arrive at all. Finally, in a strange heat, vagaries of lightning without thunder or rain—the thunder we *did* hear wasn't the old-time, pleasant, celestial sort, but something with an easily traceable, regular, decisive sound—we pulled out of the station, I not knowing where I was going—no address in the town of Lunéville.

A thick, heavy, soft, enveloping night was about us. Groups of soldiers were lying, sitting, standing in the

little stations. We stopped every few minutes, and I could distinguish them by the light of cigarette or lantern on their guns and equipment, waiting for motors to take them to the trenches. At one place I had to descend to show my *sauf-conduit;* it was inspected and stamped by the flickering light of a blue-veiled lantern, and I climbed in again. I was beginning to feel a bit tired, and the end was *not* in sight.

We descended at Lunéville in complete darkness, a motley crowd of military and civilians. My companions were due at different points at dawn—Baccarat and the Forest of Parroy. As I write, they are in the trenches. They put me into the hands of a *commissaire* who said he lived opposite E. M.'s. I waited, standing by the door, while he locked up the station, looking out on the silhouette of a gutted, roofless house, showing dimly against the soft night sky. At last there was a sound of rattling of keys and the *commissaire* picked me and my luggage up. We started forth, the only human beings visible, in what seemed a deserted town—no lights in streets or houses.

As we passed a wide open space the scent of flowering lindens enveloped me, and with me walked the ghosts of lovely and too-amiable ladies, of witty rulers loving the arts as well as women—Duke Léopold and Madame de Craon, King Stanislas and Madame de Boufflers, and Voltaire and Madame du Châtelet.

We walked seemingly through the entire town toward a freshness of parks, and in darkness we arrived before a garden gate; silence, and the bell nowhere to be found. After looking for it in the light of various matches—vainly, of course—the *commissaire* had the brilliant idea of going to the house next door, *la maison de M. le Maire*, the celebrated M. Keller. A woman came out and showed the bell where nobody would ever

have thought of looking for it, and, furthermore, masked by vines. The door was finally opened by a tall, slender, white-robed figure with two black braids showing over her shoulders and a floating scarf. I thought it a vision of Isolde, but it proved to be Miss P., who cried:

"We had given you up! We waited at Nancy till the train came in, and then had to motor back as quickly as possible on account of the lights."

I went in, to find E. M. in a most becoming, slinky, pale-blue satin *négligé*, also with braids on her shoulders. I'd rather have found them both in *paniers*, shaking the powder out of their hair. However, I can't complain; it was all pretty good as regards the stage-setting. We embraced. I explained that various zealous guardians of the gates of Nancy had stamped my *sauf-conduit*, and, as I was certainly the only one of my species arriving by that train, they should have given news of me when asked concerning *une Américaine*. Then, as the only healthy rooms in Lunéville in 1917 are on the ground floor, I departed to one that had been retained for me at the Hôtel des Vosges. Again through the soft-scented night, guided by my *commissaire*, to a room of extreme cleanliness and a most comfortable bed.

It is 2 A.M. I am too tired to sleep. My mind is jacked up by all the twists and turns of the day. I have been reading the *Cour de Lunéville*, by Gaston Maugras, found in my room, belonging to E. M.

Three o'clock. Soft, very soft booming of cannon, and a deep-toned bell. But no "poppy throws around *my* bed its lulling charities."

CHAPTER III

LUNÉVILLE

LUNÉVILLE, a dream of fair women of old and new times, linden scents, and circling Taubes and little white puffs of shrapnel against blue skies.

. . . . . .

HÔTEL DES VOSGES, *June 15th, 8 a.m.*

Have just breakfasted to the gentle accompaniment of firing on a Taube.

Dear old village life began at an early hour, but of course the Taube put the cocks and the carts and the geese and all the other usual auroral sounds quite in the background.

My breakfast service is decorated with the same double cross of Lorraine that I saw on various houses in Nancy indicating comfortable cellar accommodation. The cross with the *chardon lorrain* (Lorraine thistle) is everywhere.

Popping and cannonading going on at a lively rate, and whir of aero wheels; a beautiful day. Some little white puffs of shrapnel visible from my window; I must get dressed and investigate.

Cannonading just stopped. I don't know whether he got off or was got.

The hotel is discreet and clean, *avec un petit air.*

It has been a good house of the good epoch, and over

each window are diverse and charming eighteenth-century *motifs* in gray stone.

. . . . . .

6.30 p.m.

Just home from Vitrimont in a blinding blaze of sun, in a motor driven by E. M., and bearing in large letters the words "Commission Californienne pour la Reconstruction des Villages Dévastés," a sort of "open sesame," and everywhere bayonets were lowered to let us pass. Nerves a-quiver with another day's impressions. Tried lying down, but it didn't go, so I am in an arm-chair looking out of my Lorraine window in full eighteenth century as regards setting, but with a very definite tide of twentieth-century warfare sweeping through it all. Meant to go to church, where there are special prayers to be offered up, at Benediction, for the needs of Lorraine, but, though the spirit was willing, the rest of me was like lead after the hot, full day and two hours in one spot too tempting.

This morning, before I was dressed, E. M. and Mrs. C. P., also staying in the hotel, appeared, so I hastily harnessed up for the day and sallied forth with them. We went first to the charming old house of Mlle. Guérin, and, going in through a wide hallway, stepped out into a large garden, where, under some trees, several ladies were sitting, one of them Madame Saint-R. T. We embraced cordially, in the very evident fulfilment of destiny. Madame Saint-R. T. was reading Pierre Boyé's *Cour de Lunéville*, which I matched with Gaston Maugras's, and then I looked about me.

The house, gray and long and low, was, until a hundred years ago, a Capuchin monastery, when it came into the hands of Mlle. Guérin's family. There are old linden-trees in the garden, and some tall cedars and

roses not doing very well; and masses of canterbury-bells and geraniums. At one end of the garden, against the wall, is an ancient statue of the Virgin, dark, moss-grown, against still darker walls; we placed the flowers we had gathered on her breast and in the hands of the Child. *Avions* were humming above in the perfect sky, and against the faultless blue was a very white crescent moon just discernible.

After accepting an invitation for dinner that night, we walked out through the town toward the Château, once the haunt of witty rulers, philosophers, and of the fair and evidently too-amiable ladies beloved by them. However, when we got into the great square of the palace I forgot about them, for, looking up at the statue of Lasalle, born in Metz, 1775, and fallen at the battle of Wagram, 1807, were two Senegalese whom *we* looked at as the Lunéville populace might once have looked at the camels the young Duke Léopold brought back with him from his wars with the Turks. The juxtaposition was as strange. One of the Senegalese had on a blue cap, the other a red. We gave each one a franc for cigarettes, received large-mouthed, white-toothed smiles, and proceeded to look at the remains of a German *avion* which had fallen beside the statue the day before, the most complete wreck possible. The aviator had been killed and his broken wings were being removed to the Museum. It made me quite still—there was something so complete about it all, the great Château in the background, the statue of Lasalle, the two Senegalese, the shattered Taube!

We walked on rather quietly over the bridge of the Vesouze to the Place des Carmes—the Place Brûlée, as it is now called. The big Carmelite convent which formed the square had been used as a barracks for a generation or so, and one side had been burned with

incendiary bombs when the Germans left, while the other side was untouched. In the middle was the statue of L'Abbé Grégoire (who made the mistake of being ahead of his time), and on the pedestal are the words, "*J'ai vécu sans lâcheté, je veux mourir sans remords.*" We stopped only a moment at the church—eighteenth century, of course; fine old choir, delicate baroque designs on the great wooden doors, and dominating towers in a lovely reddish stone, with charming *motifs* of urn and scroll, and flying angels against the sky, or rather *in* it.

We began to have that "gone" feeling about this time, and turned back through the town to E. M.'s house, where we were to lunch. It was cool and charming as we stepped in out of the sun-flooded garden, stripped of the mystery of the night before, but quite lovely. In old Lunéville china vases were masses of pink and purple canterbury-bells. It had been hastily but charmingly got ready for occupancy with old furniture that nice people in the provinces can put at the disposition of their friends, and I saw again Miss P., the Isolde of the dim, scented garden of the night before. After lunch we sat in an arbor jutting into a corner of the ancient park, drinking our coffee, and eating some Mirror candies just out from New York—all to the continued hum of *avions* and the rather soft crack of guns. Then the motor was announced, or, to be faithful to reality, somebody said, "We'd better be off." We put on our veils, got into the motor, which E. M. cranked herself, and started off to Vitrimont without any male assistance of any kind.

CHAPTER IV

VITRIMONT

A MERCILESS blaze of sun as we passed out through the town, badly battered at the end, through the Place Brûlée, leading to the road to Vitrimont, some three kilometers distant, running through green fields with their little groups of black crosses. All is softly green and gently rolling. Vitrimont, and around about it, was the scene of some of the fiercest fighting of that first August of the war, and Vitrimont itself was taken and lost at the point of the bayonet seven times in one day as gray German floods kept rolling in over the green eastern hills. The village is charmingly placed on a little eminence; sloping down from it are very fertile meadows, then other thickly wooded hills slope up against the sky.

We passed through encumbered streets of devastated, roofless houses, going first to Miss P.'s little dwelling, that she has lived in during all these months of the superintending of the reconstruction work. It consists mostly of one perfectly charming room done up in yellow chintz with a square pattern of pink roses, and some good bits of old furniture, books, and flowers. She took down from the wall a violin made by a convalescing soldier out of a cigar-box and drew from it a few soft and lovely tones. The rest of the house, where she has installed herself with a woman servant, is

typical of the Lorraine peasant houses: a very wide door to let the harvest-wagons in, a narrow one for human beings, a narrow hall leading into a kitchen, then the bigger living-room giving into it, now so charming in its yellow chintz. From the kitchen some steep stairs lead up into an attic which Miss P. has converted into a medical dispensary.

Outside, across the street, is a little pergola effect made of boarding, where one can sit and look out across the softly rolling, wooded hills. In it are a table and a few chairs and some pots of flowers. We deposited our tea-things there, and were starting out to make the tour of the village, when the mayor, in shirt sleeves, loose suspenders, and slipping trousers (his wife was killed in the 1915 bombardment of Lunéville and his son fell in the 1914 fighting in Vitrimont), came to welcome us and do the inevitable stamping of our safe-conducts.

We then proceeded to the old church, one of the first things to be restored, so that its delicious fifteenth-century vaultings and window-tracings would be beyond further damage from exposure to the weather. One of the things *not* hurt was the dado running around the interior in the form of painted cloth folds by a misguided nineteenth-century *curé*. War, with its usual discriminating touch, had left *that*. In the vestibule are some small, perfect Louis XV holy-water fonts in the form of shells upheld on angels' heads. A celebrated baptismal font was removed to Paris.

We then went to the *maison forte*, as the peasants call what had been a sort of château, the dwelling of the "first family" of the place. Its medieval tower was battered beyond repair, and the house itself pretty well damaged, while some of the rooms still had charming bits of paneling, and the locks and latches of the doors

were perfect examples of eighteenth-century wrought-iron work. In one of the large rooms, whose ceiling was broken in by a shell, was a lovely old fireback under a marble mantel with the arms of the Counts of Vitrimont. By a north window was sitting a woman working at an embroidery screen with a brilliant green and silver design; an old man with palsied head was near.

The school also has been rebuilt. A rosy-faced young schoolmistress received us, and two little boys kept to do their *pensums* told us the name of the President of the United States, and showed us Washington *and* San Francisco on the map hanging in the room. This having been satisfactorily gone through with, the punished little boys, with the usual luck of the wicked, were given chocolates by E. M. and dismissed; then we walked out into the little cemetery, approached by a narrow pathway of arching sycamores. It looks out toward the ancient forest of Vitrimont; in between are more green, undulating fields ripening with the 1917 harvest. The walls of the cemetery are battered and broken and monuments and gravestones are overturned. There was furious hand-to-hand fighting there, and in those first August days the long dead again mingled with the living. I passed down by broken, sun-baked walls, reading the names on the crosses as I went, and these are some of them:

Lieut. Jeannot, 26ème Infanterie, aspirant—Un soldat inconnu—

Haye, Louis, Sergent—28 soldats—

A notre fils, Charles Diebolt, mort pour la Patrie 1895-1914, 26ème Infanterie—

Charles Carron, Musicien; Souvenir d'un camarade, mort au Champ d'Honneur 31 août 1914—

A rude wooden cross bears the words:

"*Ci-gît Edouard Durand, fusillé le 25 août 1914 par des lâches.*"

As one goes out is the tomb of a young girl; *Hélène Midon, 18 ans, victime du 1er septembre 1915—une prière—la plus jolie fille du village.*" A white and virginal rose has been planted where she lies. In this cemetery lie, too, the wife and son of the mayor.

The first upspringing of early flowers is everywhere —asters, goldenrod, wild roses—and the hot sun extracted from each its soft, peculiar perfume. I picked a seemingly perfect rose from the grave of *un soldat inconnu.* Its petals immediately fell to the ground. Everything grows with an almost ironical luxuriousness on the shallow, hastily dug graves. All over Lorraine is this same flowering; it has been and will be, but there was no time to ponder on the fate of frontier lands, for we were next to call on the officer commanding the detachment quartered at Vitrimont, who was housed in a reconstructed building and who had been waked from slumber to receive us. When I gave him my boxes of cigarettes for his men he said that he had received some before for the soldiers who had the Croix de Guerre. I promptly told him mine were for the soldiers who had *not* got it. Mrs. C. P. brought bundles of illustrated papers and postal cards.

Soldiers are everywhere helping to get in the hay; sweet odors of freshly cut grass float about on the warm air to the sound of distant cannonading. However, in spite of everything, it is already *l'après-guerre* here, and the delivered population is breathing again, but it all gives the sensation of something prostrate that needs the help of strong, fresh hands before it can arise. Mrs. Crocker's work is on such a generous, imaginative, sliding scale, and Miss P., untiring and executive, is

of immense tact in dealing with the Lorraine peasant, a peculiar type demanding peculiar handling. There are numberless psychological situations needing adjustment in the human as well as material affairs of devastated villages. Miss P. meets all difficulties with understanding plus determination. Some are content, some not, with what is done for them. One woman whose house was completed, and who was evidently dazzled by the result, said, "It isn't a house to live in, but to rent."

Another, however, when we went into the grange behind her house, pointing to the posts sustaining the hay-lofts, said: "Will they hold? The old ones were twice the size."

Sanitary improvements have been worked out as far as possible, but when you try to tamper with a peasant's pile of *fumier*, it's like tampering with his purse—and *that's* impossible. Quite a good deal of live stock has been put into Vitrimont.

A soldier stationed with the Vitrimont detachment cranked the motor for us. His home was near by, and he told us with shining eyes that he had just bought for ninety francs two pigs. Somebody observed it was the *premier pig qui coûte*. However that may be, the purchase marked the remaking of his home.

One is appalled at the time and energy and money necessary for the rebuilding of this single village—a million francs is the cost estimated—and materials and workmen are increasingly difficult to get. One thinks of the hundreds that *aren't* being rebuilt. Vitrimont has certainly been smiled on by heaven *and* Mrs. C.

As we drove home, fleecy, delicately tinted clouds were pinned together with mother-of-pearl cross-shaped brooches. It is in the air alone that there is any "war beauty."

VITRIMONT

Soldiers are passing under my window, some in the blue trench-helmets, with their equipment; some in their fatigue caps, swinging their arms, free of their eternal burdens; and there are officers afoot or on horseback, and colonials—marines, we call them—in many kinds of uniforms.

The poster on the old garden wall opposite says: *Alice Raveau viendra jouer "Werther," dimanche, le 17 juin, 1917, en matinée.*

Charlotte might have lived in the house behind the wall on which it is pasted, a gray, smooth-façaded house with a good eighteenth-century door, and a chestnut and a linden in full bloom. At the café on the corner soldiers are sitting, laughing and talking, humming, drinking their *bocks*, reading their papers, or throwing words to women who pass by, and I thought of the men who pass through these villages, leaving to women an inexorable burden and an untransmittable joy. Many swallows are flying about, and above it all, in the colorful afternoon air, *avions* are humming. On the wings of the French airplanes are stamped a great circle of color like an eye with red pupil, white retina, and a blue outer rim. After the hot day, something lovely and cool begins to come in at the window, and I know soldiers all over Lorraine are resting after the heat and burden of the day, though in the distance the dull, muffled sound of cannon continues. Now I must "dress"—that is, put on my other dress—for the eight-o'clock dinner at Mlle. Guérin's.

CHAPTER V

MONSIEUR KELLER

LUNÉVILLE, *Saturday, 16th June, 8 a.m.*

AS I put out my light and opened wide my window last night a rush of warm, linden-scented air came in, also the thick, soft, meridional voice of some soldier singing "*En passant par la Lorraine.*" I, too, was passing through Lorraine, and I got the sleep I didn't get the night before.

This morning more whirring of aeroplanes, but peaceful. The Taube got off yesterday; all the events of Friday were accompanied by that constant low-flying of aeroplanes, making one feel one was being looked after.

Dinner at Monsieur Guérin's. Monsieur Keller, the celebrated mayor of Lunéville, whose tact, courage, and good sense saved Lunéville many tragedies at the time of the German entry, took me out. He has a lively, perceptive eye, and, all in all, life seems not to have been unkind to him, though he has been invaded, and his parents before him. He received the Germans and said adieu to them all in that month of August. His fine old dwelling, where the treaty of peace was signed in 1801 between France and Austria, is next to E. M.'s, and housed at one time one hundred German soldiers, and the general and his staff were quartered in it. He was, of course, the bright particular hostage during the occupation, and was followed about by two officers and four soldiers wherever he went.

"I kept them moving," he added, with a snap of his perceptive eye.

At Lunéville one hundred and thirty houses were destroyed and there was much loss of life among civilians. The mayor has, or rather had, a property near Vitrimont, called Léomont, on a hill where there was formerly a Roman temple to the moon, and from this Lunéville is supposed to take its name. The great farm and its ancient buildings were destroyed during the bombardments of Lunéville and Vitrimont.

"It's only a war monument now," he added, philosophically.

It's the atmosphere of Lunéville that's so charming to me—this drop into full eighteenth century, with the boom of twentieth-century cannon in the distance. In spite of the sound of guns, there is some peace they can't destroy. I knew nothing about the French provinces till I got to Lunéville, and I suppose it's their immemorial and quite special atmosphere that I have received. Here the war seems to be a thing of the past; they think of their *secteur* only, and of themselves as *libérés*, and talk of the war in the past tense, and it might be 1814 just as well as 1914.

A heavenly evening. We walked in the dim old garden smelling of linden. No lights anywhere, of course, and, though the stars were beautiful, they didn't seem to light up anything terrestrial; the only things blacker than the night were the giant cedars. At dinner was a youngish, much-decorated general, coming back for a night from the front; though born in Lunéville it was the first time he had been here since the war—always fighting in other parts of France. Besides the general there were Madame Saint-R. T., E. M., and Miss P., who appeared in some sort of dull-red tunic that she ought always to wear; the mayor and his wife (she is Gasconne,

and very animated, though she said twenty years of Lunéville had somewhat calmed her); two or three women with husbands at the front bringing daughters; several young officers; and M. Guérin and his daughter —the usual war-time composition of dinner-parties in the provinces, I imagine. Excellent and very lavish repast, *maigre*, of course, but everything else except meat in profusion. I didn't get to bed till after eleven. M. Guérin walked back to the hotel with us, and, while he and Mrs. C. P. talked, again I was accosted by ghosts of dead rulers and lovely ladies and philosophers as we crossed the vast, dim Place Léopold. They, too, had crossed it and been amorous and witty, pleased or having *vapeurs*, enveloped by linden scent, and the changeless stars had controlled their destinies.

Later.

This morning we visited the military hospital in one of the most charming edifices I have ever seen, an eighteenth-century convent-building. The first entry on the tableau in the hallway giving the names of the benefactors was 1761; the last, 1913. It is a two-storied, cloistered, rambling edifice, with several wide courtyards planted with trees and flowers, a fountain in the middle of one; in another a statue of the Virgin; beyond it a sun-baked vegetable garden; and still farther, behind a hedge, the inevitable little cemetery.

We went through the wards of the hospital, high-ceilinged, spotless, airy, with the *médecin-chef*, talking with the wounded and distributing cigarettes.

One of the doctors, also mayor of Gerbéviller, said to us, when we told him we were going there in the afternoon, "But don't you want to see the young German aviator?"

Thinking it quite "in the note," we went up-stairs

AUTHOR AT VITRIMONT

CEMETERY, VITRIMONT

THE BRIDGE AT LUNÉVILLE

again. He unlocked the door of a large corner room. At a table by a window looking out on another little tree-planted court was the young eaglet with fractured "wing"—arm and shoulder—in plaster. He got up with the military salute as we came in. I begged permission to address him in German, and when I asked him where he was *zu Hause*, he answered, "Posen," and that it was far. He said he was very comfortable, but, with a longing glance at the patch of sky, added that he was dreadfully bored. I suppose he was, after being a bird in the blue ether and breaking into secular silences. He had been there a month, but was still very thin under the cheek-bones and dark about the eyes, and very young. He turned to the doctor with an entirely different expression—a sort of shutting down of iron shutters over the youthful look—on being asked in German if he had all he needed.

"Why have I had no answer to the post-cards I have written my mother?" he asked, adding, "we also have mothers."

The *médecin-chef* said: "You know you can only write once a month; but write another, all the same, and I will see it is sent off."

He had a worn French grammar on the table and had been diligently studying verbs when we entered. The doctor was *so* nice with him.

There is no bitterness at the front; the more one sees of it the more one realizes that bitterness is the special prerogative of non-combatants far from the field. I heard an American woman say to an officer just back from the front, so newly back that "the look" was still in his eyes:

"I'd like to see you at Cologne, destroying the cathedral. It would serve the Boches right."

He looked at her and made answer: "*Ce n'est pas*

comme çà, madame. Enough has been destroyed in the world. Think rather of reconstruction."

Ah! *les civils!*

Coming out, we met Mlle. des Garets and went with her to her evacuation hospital near the station, which was a triumph of turning heterogeneous spaces into a single purpose. Two old railway sheds had been converted into receiving-rooms, douche-rooms, refectories, and several eighteenth-century cellars had been so arranged that in case of bombardment they could stow away fifteen hundred wounded. This seems a simple enough statement, but just think what stowing away, *suddenly*, fifteen hundred wounded means! Mlle. des Garets, a daughter of General des Garets, has been marvelous in her devotion and practicality since the beginning of the war.

I hear the motor-horn. . . .

CHAPTER VI

GERBÉVILLER AND LA SŒUR JULIE

WE started out for Gerbéviller in a blinding sun, over a road leading through pleasant green meadows. That is one of the strange things of Lorraine—everywhere destroyed villages and everywhere well-planted fields, almost as if planted by the ghostly throngs of heroes who lie within. For in nearly every field there are the little clusters of black crosses, hung with flowers or the tricolor badge, or quite bare—with the number of men who lie within, or a date, scarcely ever a name.

We went into the village, very ancient, that owes its name, Ville des Gerbes, to a miracle performed there by St.-Mansuy, past the completely destroyed château of the Lambertye family, and, going up a winding street, reached the house of Sister Julie, the heroine of August, 1914. On every side were gutted houses and piles of mortar and stones; one enterprising individual of the fair sex had installed against a resisting wall Le Café des Ruines, and some soldiers and civilians were sitting on bits of stone and masonry, drinking their *bocks* and reading newspapers. The convent-building is in the principal street, and it was unharmed save for a little peppering of rifle-fire and a bit of cornice knocked off—*par la grâce de Dieu*, as Sister Julie afterward told us. Up three steps, and one finds oneself in a narrow, an-

cient stone hallway. Turning to the right, one enters a cool, peaceful room of the convent-parlor type—a large crucifix, lithographs of the last three popes, horsehair furniture, white crocheted doilies, everything spotless. In a moment Sister Julie came in. Her flashing eyes, her determined jaw, show her always to have been a woman of parts, and yet her whole life is really crowded into those few eventful days of the latter part of August, when "they" entered the town. For the rest, the quiet, useful routine of the nursing and teaching order of St. Charles de Nancy, which had been *chassé* at the time of the French Revolution; a few nuns managed to remain hidden, and the order has been preserved. She is evidently a responsive soul, for she immediately began to enact the story of the arrival of the Germans, with a certain art in the presentment of the tragedy of the little town, gained, no doubt, by many recitals.

The Germans came into the town on the 27th of August, after the heroic defense of the bridge over the Mortagne by a detachment of fifty-four men of the 2d Chasseurs from sunrise to sunset, who held up during hours the brigade of the Bavarian General Clauss. Finally, at five o'clock the gray hosts got through and passed in with a great sound of tramping feet and ringing hoof, and, after the manner of invaders, *mettant le feu et le sang dans le village.* Sister Julie thought her hour also had come. In the room where we were sitting she had placed her thirteen wounded men, brought in at intervals during the day. "*Mes petits,*" she called them, and her eyes shone softly at the memory. She sent the other sisters up to the attic, and remained alone to face the enemy and to beg that the house be spared. She went out on the little step, not knowing what fate awaited her, and found four immense officers on horseback, with their horses' heads facing her.

"They thought they were Charlemagnes, immense men, with light hair and light-blue eyes and arched noses and gallooned uniforms. I was like a dwarf in comparison, and I am not small." To tell the truth, she is indeed a "muscular Christian."

Then began the interrogatory, the ranking officer demanding of her:

"*Sie sprechen Deutsch?*"

She said to us, with a smile:

"I did speak it in my youth, but it wasn't the moment to recall my studies, and I didn't answer, and we remained for a few seconds looking at each other *comme des chiens de faïence.*[1] I so little on the house-step, and they so tall on their big horses, and with poignards drawn from their breast pockets, *pas le beau geste de tirer l'épée du côté,*" she finished, disdainfully.

Finally, the silence was broken by the ranking officer, whose next words were in French: "*Nous ne sommes pas des barbares;* you have soldiers and weapons concealed in your house. Lead the way."

Then the four officers dismounted and, with pistols in one hand and poignards in the other, followed Sister Julie into the little room where the thirteen wounded men were lying. Their helmets touched the ceiling as they looked about them. Standing by the first bed nearest the door, an officer pulled down the covers.

"You have arms concealed."

"We have nothing. You will find only men lying in their blood."

By this time Sister Julie was not only talking, but acting the scene, indicating where the beds were, where she had stood, where the four *chefs* had entered, and how the eyes of the wounded men followed her. The officers made the rounds of the beds, pulling down each

[1] Like porcelain dogs.

stained cover, Sister Julie following to re-cover the men, who were expecting, as was she, the order to burn the house.

She continued: "They were Bavarians, and when I said: 'You see, we have nothing. Leave me my wounded, in the name of Mary most Holy,' the commanding officer began to look at the point of his shoe as men do when they are embarrassed. I have seen surgeons do just that when they are in doubt about an operation," she added. "Then he suddenly turned without a word and went out, followed by the other three, pistols and poignards in hand. They passed up the street with their detachment, '*mettant le feu et le sang au village; et moi, restée avec mes petits, à remercier le bon Dieu—et de leur donner à boire.*'"

We gave our little offerings into her generous hands, and sniffed the scent of freshly baked bread that permeated the corridor. E. M. photographed her standing on her historic steps, and we went out into the hot, cobble-stoned street, to the completely ruined Lambertye château, standing in the midst of a park whose gardens were designed by Louis de Nesle. Two large and very beautiful porphyry basins near the house were untouched —not a nick or a scratch. On the great marble fireplace of what had been the big central hall, now uncovered to the day, we could still read the words:

Charles de Montmorency
Duc de . . . . mbourg,
Maréchal de France.

Afterward E. M. took some more photographs, and we sped homeward to pack our belongings and dash into Nancy to get the eight-o'clock train from there for Bar-le-Duc, to be ready for the high adventure of Verdun early the next morning.

CHAPTER VII

BAR-LE-DUC

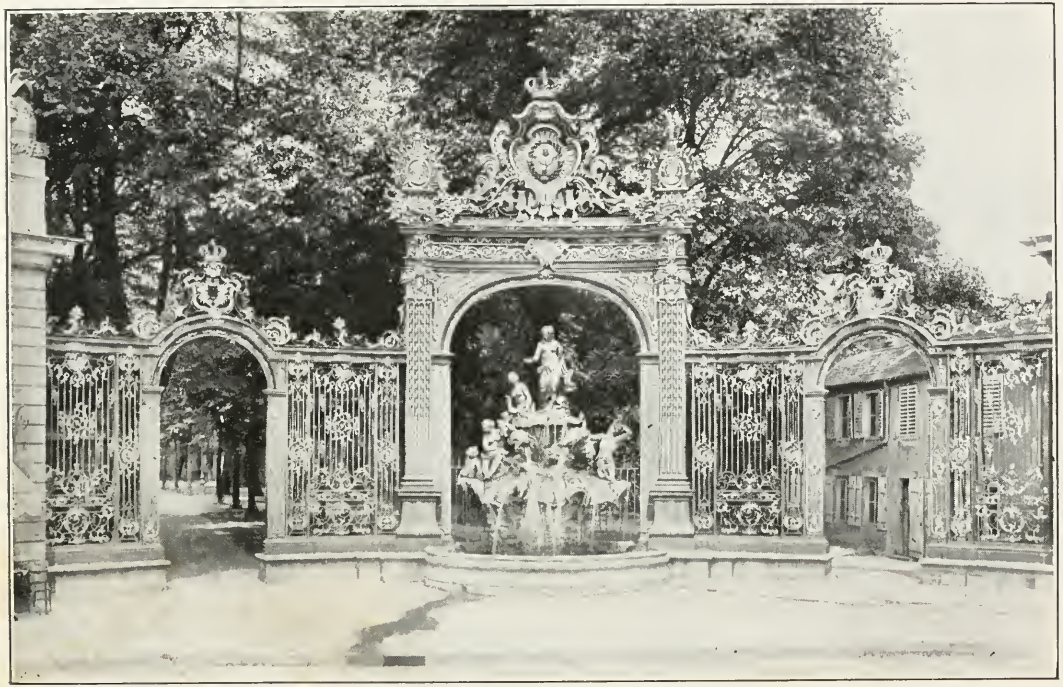
BAR-LE-DUC, *Sunday, June 17th, 2 a.m.*

SCRIBBLING in an indescribable brown-upholstered room, where one lies on the outside of a dark and menacing bed covered by one's own coat, a strong odor of stable coming in at the window and a horrid black cat wandering about. It's no night to sleep. Two o'clock has just softly sounded from some old bell. I didn't hear one o'clock, I am thankful to say. I was in a sort of trance of fatigue when we got here at eleven.

Miss P. motored us into Nancy, straight into the setting sun. My eyes were so tired that I didn't try to pierce the hot glaze, but there's a memory of running through green fields, with black crosses, saline installations (Rosières aux Salines), manufacturing towns (Dombasle-sur-Meurthe), and Gothic towers (St. Nicholas du Port), and a dash through the new factory suburbs of Nancy into the delicate and perfect loveliness of the Place Stanislas. Neither E. M. nor I had a permit to go to Bar-le-Duc, the point of departure for Verdun, but Mrs. P. had, so she was deputed to order dinner at the Café Stanislas, while we went to the Hôtel de Ville to try to find the *Secrétaire Général*, Mr. Martin, a special friend of E. M.'s, and do what I call "cutting barbed wire." It seemed at one time as if the high adventure

of Verdun might have to be abandoned, as the *Secrétaire Général*, who alone could give us the necessary permission, had been called to Pont-à-Mousson to investigate the results of a raid of German *avions* there and at Pompey that morning. However, when fate has made up its mind that things shall happen, any deadlock is cleared up by the puppets themselves, literally on a string this time, for as we were standing there in the room with the impotent substitute of the *Secrétaire Général*, the telephone rang, and who was it but the so desired gentleman calling up about something on the long-distance wire. E. M. literally grabbed the receiver, explained the situation, and he gave the necessary authority to his substitute, and we in turn gave the oft-repeated story of our lives from the cradle to the present moment, and finally could depart with papers in order for dinner at the Café Stanislas. Again as we walked across the lovely Place my soul was stirred with memories of peace, love, and the arts of peace. I seemed to understand anew those words, "The arts of peace," and in a half-dream I looked up at the heavens. Again pale, charming faded tints of blues and grays and pinks were the background for the urns and figures of the sky-line of the pure and lovely buildings that surround it, and a crescent moon with something untouched and virginal flung a last charm about it all.

We found Mrs. C. P. waiting at the same table at which I had sat two nights before with the sons of Mars and the man of God. We were just beginning our dinner when, looking out of the window, we saw something strange and for a moment unclassifiable, in an almost impossible juxtaposition of ideas. No one's mind would be sufficiently mobile to grasp what it was without blinking a bit. The great, portentous black cross on its wings was what started the mind working properly. It was



FOUNTAIN OF AMPHITRITE BY JEAN LAMOUR, PLACE STANISLAS, NANCY

the Taube brought down at Pont-à-Mousson that morning, being drawn on a *camion* through the delicious, delicate tracery of Jean Lamour's wrought-iron gate!

1755–1917!

We dashed out; a crowd was already gathering. A young French aviator with a curious look in his eyes was watching it being set up. Having espied the wings on his uniform, we asked "what and where and how" and are "they" dead or prisoners? Some one said, "*C'est lui*," indicating the young man, who did not answer our questions, but continued to stand quite still in some sort of dream or *détente* of nerves. But a man in the crowd said:

"He brought it down at Pont-à-Mousson, and *they* are prisoners." We were standing by the statue of *Stanislas le Bienfaisant, Stanislas le Bon*, his reign *le règne des talents, des arts et des vertus* (these last not as we know them in 1917), and he *was* looking on strange things! We went back to the café, consumed in haste and distraction the very nice little dinner, topped off by strawberries and cream and the celebrated *macarons des Sœurs Macarons*, and again I found myself dashing to the station, which one thinks is near and isn't, accompanied by my two fair friends, all going at the same *allure militaire* that I had taken forty-eight hours before with the two Breton officers and the Chaplain of the 52d.

Wild dash at the station for our hand-luggage, and stampings of safe-conduct, then a hunt for the porter, who, with an excess of zeal (and hope), had reserved a coupé for us and put up the fateful words *dames seules*. Now there is no such thing as *dames seules* at the front. Many officers were standing in the corridor, one on crutches, so we tore the forbidding words from the windows, and the compartment automatically, though courteously, filled.

Among them two immense, dark-bearded men from the Midi, with accents to defeat the enemy, and a pale officer from near the Swiss frontier, as we afterward discovered. He smiled when I said to the dark one sitting by me, after the greetings and thanks:

"You come from Marseilles?" (He came from a little place five miles from there.)

The officer on crutches stretched his leg with a contraction of the face and a sigh of relief. They were all *en route* for home, from the same regiment, the seven precious days of *permission* counting from the hour they reach their homes till the hour they leave them, after months in the field. They had fought in Belgium, on the dunes, these men of the south, those first eighteen months, up to their waists in water, often for weeks at a time. They found the Lorraine landscape that so soothed my soul only fairly pretty, and spoke soft praises of *le Midi*.

They all had the strange, bold, hard, shining look about the eyes, with a deeper suggestion of sadness, that men just returning from action have. It is the warrior look—one kills or one is killed, one conquers or is conquered; there is no *via media*.

The pale officer from Savoy said: "There should never be any war; *c'est trop terrible;* but, once given the fact that war exists, all means to victory are justifiable." And the bright, hard look deepening on his face made me suddenly think of Charles Martel and Charlemagne, and I knew it was the way French warriors have looked through the ages, but, oh! France. "*Oh doux pays!*"

At Bar-le-Duc, dating from the Merovingians, at least, we descended (our bags passed out of the windows by the officers), and went through a dark, silent, linden-scented town, obliged to drag our own belongings through an interminable street, over a bridge across tree-bordered

black water, till we got to this abode, known to men by the name of Hôtel de Metz et du Commerce. What the devils call it I don't know; I have just chased the black cat out, and if I don't get some sleep I shall not get to Verdun. There's no linden scent coming in at my window here.

BAR-LE-DUC, *eight o'clock a.m.*

Waiting in the sandy-floored dining-room of the hotel. All three of us very cross. At dawn not only the light, but the sounds of chopping of wood, emptying of pails, and invectives of various sorts came in at the dreadful windows. At seven the maid mounted to know if we wanted the water in the tea or the tea in the water. That tea "threw" them. Not a sign of the famous Bar-le-Duc jellies that one has eaten all one's life, even *outre-mer*. We compared notes of furry, rumpled sheets, dented pillows, dark coverlets, dreadful scents, and unmistakable sounds. We are now somewhat restored by hot and very good *café au lait*, and Mrs. C. P. is looking out of the door for signs of Mr. de Sinçay, who has just stepped out of his motor.

CHAPTER VIII

VERDUN

VERDUN! The sound is like a clarion call. Verdun! It is short, but gravely harmonious. It is satisfying to the ear, it is quickening to the soul. Verdun! It is for France the word of words; in it lies the whole beauty of her language and of her martial glory as well.

Who shall say it is but a fortuitous collection of letters, this word Verdun, beautiful as a chalice, that holds the dearest blood of France? It would not have been the same mystically, perhaps not actually, had it been Toul or Epinal or even that other melodic sound, Belfort. Verdun! It is the call through red days and nights, and everywhere the sons of France rallying to it with great hurryings lest mayhap one be there before the other, to dye with deeper color the crimson of high deeds. Verdun, ear and tongue relinquish you regretfully.

Verdun, glory and sorrow of France, I salute you, Verdun! Verdun!

. . . . . .

Night, silence, and memory turning over the events of the day.

I stopped writing this morning as a gentleman of supreme personal distinction entered the little sandy-floored café, a gentleman who should always be arriving in a dark-red, sixty-horse-power Panhard, or re-

ceiving on a terrace with a castle behind him, or sitting in a library of first editions only, in soft but gorgeous bindings. It was M. de S., and we shortly all got into the big auto, we three women on the broad back seat, M. de S. in front with the military chauffeur. Even the bend of his long back was *l'élégance suprême*. He said the motor had seen three years of war-service, but certainly there was something unfatigued about it as it started out through the ancient streets of Bar-le-Duc, on the white road to the fateful fortress. The arrow on the first Verdun sign-post gave a feeling of having shot itself into one's heart, as well as pointing the way.

Almost immediately we met a long convoy bringing men back from the front, ourselves and everything else enveloped in a white plaster-of-Paris-like cloud of dust. It seemed an endless line, with their camouflaged canvas tops and sides, painted in great splashes of green and brown. In some of them the men were singing the *chansons de route* that soldiers so love, and many of them had green branches stuck in the sides as a slight protection against the sun and the shifting white dust. The grass and flowers of the wayside were as if dipped in whitewash, but the road, like all the roads of France —those veins of her body of death *and* life—was in excellent condition. Next we met a great line of Red Cross convoys, and all the time we were swinging through ruined villages.

At the entrance to X. the guard stopped us with his bayonet. Our papers being in *archi* condition, we passed through the little village of the *Quartier-Général* without further hindrance. In front of the Mairie there is a quaint old fountain with its statue of three women holding up a *motif* of flowers in a basket; near by there is an old hostelry, *Le Raisin Blanc*, in front of which soldiers were sitting, drinking their *bocks* and reading

newspapers. Turning out again on the white road, we pass settlements of Red Cross barracks and munition parks, looking for all the world like mining camps in Western towns at home.

We arrived at Dugny at ten o'clock and descended to look about for a suitable place for the installing of a canteen, which was partly our reason for being where we were. There is an old country house in the middle of the little town, with a coat of arms above the door and lions crouching on its gates; behind is a lovely ancient park with linden and elder trees in full blossom, and under them quiet, shady walks. It is used as an ambulance station, and convalescing men were sitting or lying about on the ground. We met the *médecin-chef*, who, however, like all doctors, didn't care two-pence for well soldiers, and was but platonically interested in the canteen matter—just as the military count out the sick and wounded soldiers. It's all in the point of view.

As we stood talking a German aeroplane flew high above Dugny outlined in a perfect sky. Little white clouds of shrapnel from the vertical guns began to burst about it in the clear blue, and there was a louder sound of cannonading as the *avion* disappeared in some far and upper ether. E. M.'s brother had been once stationed here for months, and she told the story of his meeting unexpectedly his cousin Casimir. They were going different ways with different detachments, and they "held up the war" while they embraced! Smart officers, ahorse and afoot, convoys going to the trenches with rations, great carts full of bread, and ambulating soup-kitchens filled the little street. Verdun was but seven kilometers distant, and the road lay straight before us as we left Dugny. On the horizon the outline of the citadel and the towers of the cathedral showed

against the sky. Another endless convoy of ambulances and *camions* enveloped us in a choking white dust. This is the lining of the front, and it is quite easy to see where the war billions go.

We passed into Verdun under the Porte de France, and then went immediately up to the citadel through the old drawbridge, all dating from the days of Louis XIV and Vauban, and it was at Verdun that the sons of Louis the Debonair met to divide the empire of Charlemagne.[1]

We got out by the demolished barracks, and M. de S. went to pay his respects to the colonel, who was expecting him. As I descended I saw at my feet a beautiful tiny bird's nest, which I picked up with a clutching at the heart. The birds went away that first terrible spring of 1916, the colonel afterward told me, but they had come back in great numbers in 1917, and were everywhere building their nests, in spite of the continual bombardments. The citadel was a desolate mass of mortar, stones, rusty barbed-wire entanglements, blackened and broken tree stumps, but everywhere, too, were quantities of undiscourageable new green.

We met a young doctor coming across the Place, and fell into conversation with him. He had been at the front since the beginning, and he was sad-eyed in spite of his youth. When I spoke of the near-by tenth-century tower toppling and half-demolished, all that

[1] Verdun, the Virdunum of the Romans. In the third century a bishopric was founded there with Saint Saintin as first bishop; 843, the treaty of Verdun; after the battle of Fontanet the three sons of Louis the Debonair, Lothair, Louis of Bavaria, and Charles the Bald, divided the empire of Charlemagne, with the result that not only was France separated from Germania, but her natural boundaries, the Alps and the Rhine, were lost; 1792, the Prussians besieged it in force and it was obliged to capitulate after two days; 1870, a heroic defense lasting nearly three months ending in capitulation; 1916, *Ils n'ont pas passé, ils ne passeront pas.*

was left of the ancient church, and the celebrated abbey of Saint-Vannes, and said what a pity it was that the beautiful things of the old days had to go, he answered, with a gesture of complete indifference:

"*Qu'est-ce que celà fait? A nous qui restons de faire de nouvelles choses, et mieux, que n'en ont fait nos aïeux.* All the comrades I loved in the beginning are gone—and what remains, or perishes, of brick and mortar is of little account beside the sum of living things that is lost."

Just at this moment M. de S. appeared with the colonel, and the young philosopher touched his cap. We were then introduced to Colonel Dehaye, a brilliant officer and delightful *homme du monde*, loving the arts of peace, as I afterward discovered, as well as practising those of war. In his hands now lie the destinies of Verdun. He presented us each then and there with the famous medal of Verdun and an accompanying paper with his signature, and furthermore gave us an invitation to lunch, which we accepted with delight after delicate references to sandwiches and wine in the motor. We spent half an hour walking about the citadel, and he showed us the most recent damage—of yesterday—when a very especially precise aim of the Germans had destroyed nearly everything that had been left.

Then we descended really into the bowels of the earth, cemented, white-tiled, electric-lighted, artificially aired bowels, to the very depths of the great fortress. To get to the mess-room of the colonel and his staff we had to pass through a long room where perhaps a hundred officers were sitting at dinner. There was something deeply impressive about the dim, long, low length of it, and those groups of men prepared for battle. Thoughts of Knights Templar and Crusaders came to me, and there seemed something of consecration about

Déjeuner du 17 Juin 1917

Menu

Sardines à l'huile

Civet de Bœuf

Pommes Lyonnaise

Jambon d'York

Salade

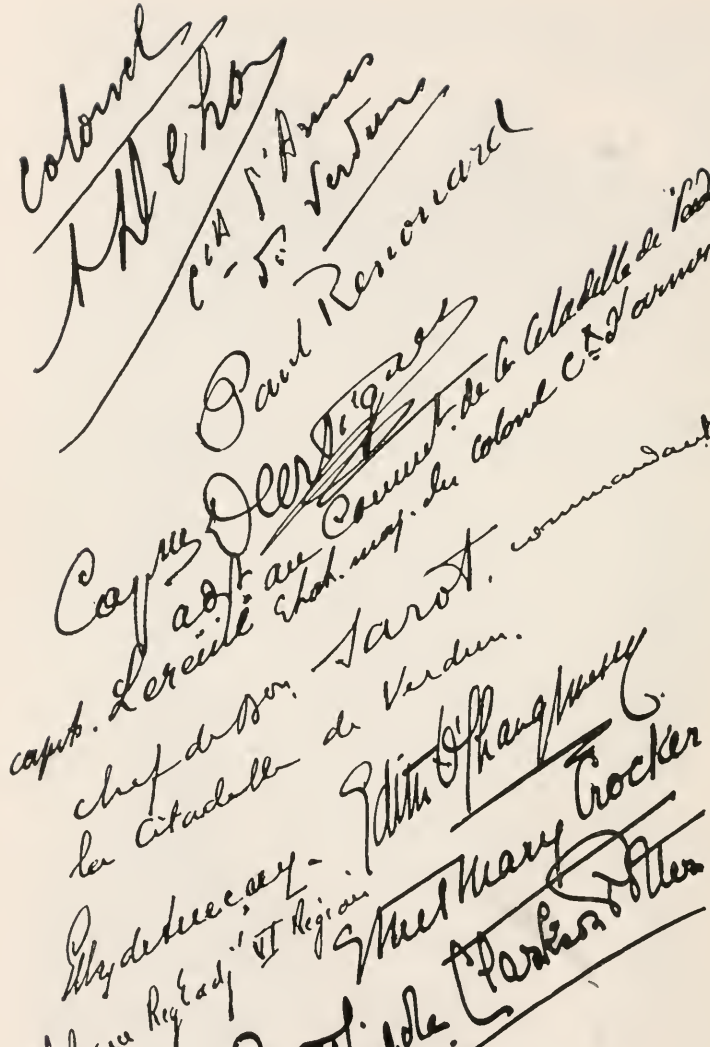
Fraises

Dessert

Café

G. CHAUVAT. 1917.

COLONEL Cte D'ARMES ★ SECTEUR DE VERDUN



it all. Behind the tables on the walls were hung helmets and arms.

A young officer said to me once, "We don't tell *all* our stories there and we don't often laugh very loud."

From it we got into the small, well-lighted mess-room, where kings and presidents and premiers and generalissime, too, have dined in the past few months.

The staff and Paul Renouard, the painter, were waiting, and we sat down immediately to an excellent dinner, though the colonel said it was entirely *à l'improviste*. There were flowers on the table, too, but these I did suspect were specially for us. The colonel remarked, with the *hors-d'œuvre*, that he would take us to the battle-field after dinner, to the famous Fort de Souville, and the repast, instead of a meal, became the prelude to a supreme climax. The arrival of General Pershing was the first subject of conversation, accompanied by the most courteous and appreciative remarks; one of the officers told of the first day when the Stars and Stripes had appeared in the field with the other flags, and of the cheers that went up. And they drank to the United States, and we drank to France; they praised the work of women, and spoke of the immense moral and practical aid of the entry into the war of the United States. Whether it would shorten the conflict was another question. To the captain sitting opposite I said:

"If the soul of the war has a special dwelling-place it is Verdun," and told him how the thought of America turned about it those days of February and March of 1916. "But," I added, "there was a time when I thought they might get through."

The commandant answered quickly from the other end of the table: "Ah, madame, there was a time when *we* thought they might get through, *mais 'ils n'ont pas passé—ils ne passeront pas.'*"

And then I quoted the beautiful phrase of the *Commentaires de Polybe:*[1]

"*Et Verdun, en ruines, avec ses soldats, debouts, toujours dans la tempête, comme il n'y en a jamais eu de plus beaux . . . avec Nivelle, et avec Pétain, avec l'image de Raynal qui vient roder la nuit dans les décombres de Vaux et avec le paraphe de Castelnau sur cet autre Couronné. . . .*"

We ended a most pleasant repast, with its great under throb, by coffee and tilleul and a little glass of cassis (black-currant cordial), the native liqueur.

Then, on into a room where we pulled up our coat-collars so no white would show, slung the bags containing the gas-masks across our chests, left our flowers, parasols, and other impedimenta, and went out through the long, dim now empty hall to get into the autos. We waited half an hour for ours, which had performed the seemingly impossible feat of getting lost in Verdun. The officers began to get impatient, and M. de S. to make bitter remarks about his chauffeur; the colonel to walk up and down. The commandant said, "*Du calme,*" and the colonel answered that only sous-lieutenants *savent avoir du calme.* "*Ils sont étonnants,*" said another officer with four stripes on his arm.

Finally our man appeared, with a story no one listened to, Colonel Dehaye getting in with us, the other officers leading the way in his auto.

It was two o'clock, and a white, burning sun was shining on a white, burning earth as we drove through the crumbling streets, through houses in every stage of ruin, to the great plain of La Woëvre, toward the dreadful, scarred battle-field, where the chariot of God rides the ridges.

Verdun is built to reinforce the natural rampart of

[1] *Neuvième série.*

the Côtes de Meuse, to bar the passage of the river's valley, and cover the Argonne.

As we passed out of the town on one side was a cemetery where sleep four thousand, on another side sleep twenty thousand—and these are but a handful to the numbers that lie everywhere in the white, scarred earth around Verdun. The colonel named various battered places as we passed—Fleury, Tavannes, etc., and finally we climbed a steep hillside near the celebrated Fort de Souville, where we left the motors. The abomination of desolation over which we passed once had been a green, smiling, wooded, gently rolling hillside. The village of Tavannes was but a spot of white horror, even with the ground. The hills of Douaumont and Thiaumont had on their blanched sides only a few blackened stumps of trees that will not leaf again. To the left as we looked about were the fateful summits of Le Mort Homme and Hill 304 with a white ribbon of road running between. We walked along, stumbling over heaps of water-bottles, haversacks, helmets, cartridge-belts, belonging alike to the invader and the invaded—bones, skulls, rusty rolls of barbed wire, remains of *obus*, and mixed with what lies in the earth of fair and brave and dear are myriads of unexploded shells. The country round Verdun, despite the rich blood that could render it so fertile, can't be cultivated for years on account of the vast quantities of shells buried in it. A man pulls a piece of wire, and he loses his hand, another tries to clear away bits of something round, and his head is blown off. One of the officers told us of societies for the demineralization of battle-fields, but the work is slow and costly.

Yet a winter's snows had lain upon it all and spring had breathed over it since the first awful combats of February, 1916. I knew suddenly some complete

"heartbreak over fallen things" as I stumbled, and, looking down, saw at my feet a helmet, and by it a skull with insects crawling in and out the eyes, and a broken gun-stock.

Great and gorgeous patches of scarlet poppies in a profusion never seen before splash themselves like something else red against the white earth, or fill great shell hollows and spill and slop over the fields. . . .

The Germans had been shelling a near-by 75 battery that very morning, and fresh bits of *warm* shrapnel were lying all about as we twisted in and out of the *boyaux*. I brought away but a small bit with me, having early discovered that a small piece is as good a reminder as a big bit, and much easier to carry. We passed the grave of a soldier buried where he had fallen, a few hours before. His shallow grave, with its little cross, was running *red*, but he was mayhap already in his Father's house of many mansions.

In many places under the feet scarcely buried bodies gave an elastic sensation. . . .

We first visited the emplacement of a great gun worked by the most complicated electric machinery, something that seemed built as strongly as the Pyramids, revolving on its great axis, at a touch fulfilling that which it was cast into being to perform. When we came out, we climbed some last white scarred heights that the colonel called "*Les Pyrénées*," and there, stretched out, was the whole great and fateful panorama of Verdun—"*par où ils n'ont pas passé.*" I thought of the men I had known who had been engaged in those dreadful attacks, whose mothers and wives had looked upon them again, and of others still whose wives and mothers would behold them no more. And I had again a breaking of the heart over the vast tangle, and cried within myself, "Shall all the world be a valley of dry bones?"

OUR PARTY ON THE BATTLE-FIELD AT VERDUN, JUNE 17, 1917

IN THE BOYAUX, VERDUN, JUNE 17, 1917

Then we hid ourselves in some *boyaux* well out of sight, for we were nearing a camouflaged battery, two of whose guns had been silenced that very morning. In dark woods over beyond Tavannes the Germans were intrenched, and their shells were also falling thickly over Douaumont and Thiaumont. It was the front indeed. It was at Tavannes that in a dreadful moment, in a moment such as can happen anywhere, artillery fire had been trained on thousands of men who were rushing to the top in a great charge. And yet I kept thinking of the words of a dead hero, "Nothing but good can befall the soldier, so he plays his part well." [1]

At that moment the enemy began to send an unwonted number of shells, which were exploding just behind Thiaumont, so the colonel told the captain of artillery—who had joined our party at the gun emplacement—to answer, and he climbed down a steep decline to his masked battery. In a few minutes, as we lay hidden in the *boyau*, twenty discharges sounded; but shells that go up, come down, and on the other side of the hill we were watching, who shall say what agony? I am so constituted that I cannot think of the passage of any soul into the next life other than with awe.

We then descended into the Fort of Souville, down 850 feet, where men live and breathe and have their being in dimly lighted, damp, narrow spaces. But it seemed temporarily like heaven to be out of the glare and the heat. Preceded by lanterns, an officer in front of each one of us, we crept or felt our way up and down, stumbling through vault-like passages, where we would come upon men lying asleep in damp, dim places, or writing by the light of lanterns, or preparing meals in their kitchen, or waiting at the little dispensary, and

[1] Alan Seeger, *Letters and Diary.*

then we stumbled up again into the heat, reverberating from the white hills.

On the way back we passed a little chapel installed in an old cemented dugout. On the altar were many flowers. I bent and peered into the dimness, and, as I knelt, it seemed to me that never had I so understood the words *Introibo ad Altare Dei*. I thought of the Lamb of God, and martyrs new and old, and the catacombs and the primitive Church. . . . Again men in stress were worshiping in the bowels of the earth.

We were photographed against a particularly sinister group of blackened trees, and we picked up some helmets and bits of *obus*. As I write, the *couronne* of one, quite evenly exploded, lies on the little table by my side.

Just before getting into town the colonel ordered the motor to stop, and we got out, and, walking through a field of deep, waving grass, found ourselves in the largest of the cemeteries with its long, even lines of broad graves where lie, in a last co-mingling, the brothers of France, and I repeated to myself in a quiver of feeling, "*Scio quod Redemptor meus vivit et in novissimo die resurrecturus sum et in carne mea videbo Deum Salvatorum meum.*"

All was in beautiful order. The crosses bore sometimes a name, but oftener a number only: *140 soldats*, or *85 soldats*. The round tricolor badge hung from every cross. There were a few graves of officers who could be identified, their bodies having been brought in by friends or faithful orderlies. How anything could live on those fire-swept hills is the wonder, not that any one died. Suddenly, again, a great sadness fell upon me, and as the colonel pointed out the grave of an especially dear comrade—Colonel Dubois, I think his name was—dead in some heroic manner, I could look no more.

We finally got back into the green freshness of Ver-

dun, whose normal state, I see, is to be vine-bowered, tree-shaded, grass-carpeted. After the scarred and blazing battle-field, and in spite of the ruined streets, the roofless houses, I had a feeling of refreshment, coming from those heights where "all the round world is indeed a sepulcher" . . . and near the station is the monument to the heroes fallen at Verdun in 1870.

Of the Cercle Militaire on the right bank of the Meuse little is left except the walls, but it is no loss architecturally, and *messieurs les officiers* are otherwise engaged. The banks of the Meuse are a pitiful sight. The old houses that reach over the water are roofless, bits of mattress hang from broken windows, and heaps of mortar are falling into the river. The great Porte Chaussée of the fifteenth century, with its two huge gray towers, is unharmed. We stopped at the theater for a moment. A big shell last month had made a sort of pudding of it. We crept in through a large aperture, to find the orchestra stalls precipitated onto the stage, and the loges sagging, ready to fall. We then went up into the old, high part of the town, and Colonel Dehaye, a true lover of the arts, in sadness showed us the cathedral and the charming old buildings that surround it. The huge church constructed according to Germanic traditions has two equal transepts, with high and beautiful vaulting, which is now so damaged that the roof at any time may fall. Inside were masses of débris, and nothing was left of the famous stained-glass windows except powdery bits of color on the floor. The colonel had rescued some old Spanish Stations of the Cross, and had put in safety a few other portable things of value. We passed out through the sacristy, which was a scene of disorder, bits of vestment, torn altar-cloths, and books lying about on the floor.

"But," I said, "the Germans didn't get here?"

"Oh," answered one of the officers, with a smile, "*ce sont nos bons français.*"

Then we descended into the crypt, the remains of the church that Pope Eugene III built in the twelfth century. Leading down to it is an old winding stair, with a delicious eighteenth-century wrought-iron railing. An artist in a white blouse, sent to restore some frescoes dating from the twelfth century, was rescuing from too complete destruction a beautiful figure of Christ with something stern and immutable in His look, reminding me of the Christ in the church of San Cosmo and San Damiano in the Roman Forum. We then went into the cloisters, with lovely and diverse *motifs* on their vaultings, very much damaged in parts, a big shell having landed in the courtyard which they inclose. M. Renouard had stationed himself there with his easel, before a beautiful arrangement of trees and grass and enchanting old statues on mossy pedestals. In front of him was a great heap of fallen masonry, and a beautiful bit of toppling vaulting that the colonel had had propped up by beams, though he said: "*Demain ou àpres-demain cela ne sera plus*—it's all at the mercy of a shot." A sculptured Holy Family, somewhat the worse for *war*, is plastered into one side, dating from the fourteenth century.

From there we passed into what had been a seminary until 1914, and one of the rooms with rows of *lavabos* (not of the eighteenth century, as the colonel observed) looked out on the great plain of La Woèvre, and again the fateful panorama was unrolled before us. In what had been a council-room there was an old choir high up over the door, with a little balcony giving a Spanish effect.

Coming out, at the north side of the church, an ancient Romanesque statue of Adam and Eve on the

outer hemicycle of the apse and some little windows, also of pure Romanesque, were pointed out to us. In the ground underneath the statue of Adam and Eve a great shell had opened up a Roman foundation and walls, formed of immense square blocks of stone, hidden during ages.

Near the church is the great Cour d'Honneur, once the house of the bishop, a very perfect example of Louis XIV, making me think of Versailles; but it, too, has received many a blow in its lovely heart. One longed so to bandage up all those wounds of war, preserve in being those lovelinesses of another age.

We then visited the house of Pope Julius II (I forget what he was doing at Verdun), which, fortunately, has not suffered much up to now, though it, too, is at the mercy of a shot—to-night, to-morrow, or the next day. It would make a perfect museum, with its beautiful old door, bearing inscription and date, through which one passes into a tiny V-shaped court with a flowering linden-tree, and there are two romantic winding stone stairways, with something Boccaccioesque about them, leading to the upper stories.

Though it wasn't an occasion in which to think how one felt, the flesh *was* weary by this time, and we went gladly back to the colonel's mess-room, where we had tea, or rather, to be exact, some ice-cold champagne *coupé d'eau*, and some sort of madeleine, a specialty of Verdun, which gave us the little flip-up that we needed. Another specialty of Verdun is the *dragées* (hard, sugared almonds), but the factory, so one of the officers said, had been destroyed the year before in one of the bombardments. Generations of tourists having broken their teeth on them, however, we wasted no regrets.

The colonel begged us to stay for dinner, and the cinematograph representation after, but we were ob-

liged to regretfully decline, as we had to pay our respects to the general at Y——, to whose courtesy M. de S. owed the safe-conducts to Verdun. As we passed by we looked into the long, narrow hall where the representations are given, the sight of which the colonel offered as further inducement. It would have ennobled for me forever that most boresome of modern things, had I assisted at one underneath the citadel of Verdun. The hall was hung with flags of the Allies. With sudden tears I saluted, ours waving among them.

We thanked a thousand times the colonel and his group of officers standing by the auto at the entrance to the subterranean passage, and though I had a consciousness of the uncertainty of their lives, I thought again "Nothing but good can befall the soldier, so he plays his part well."

Now comes to mind a conversation I had before I ever dreamed of going to Verdun, when I talked for three hours of battles and scars with a young hero wounded on Hill 304, June 9, 1916. He is a flashing-eyed, straight-featured, tall, slim-waisted young hero who knows what it is to have made, and with astounding ease, the sacrifice of the life that he loves so, and drinks in full bumpers. And this is part of what we said, one of a thousand, of ten thousand, of a hundred thousand happenings, of which Verdun is the golden frame:

De G.—"There was something hanging about Verdun; '*Ils ne passeront pas, et ils ne sont pas passés.*' If the enemy could have but known how thinly, poorly, in so many places it was defended! It was seemingly the will of Heaven rather than the strength of mortals that they were not to pass, not man, not artillery, but the high destiny of nations.

"When I lay during those hours at the *poste d'observa-*

tion on Hill 304, in front of the French army, signaling 'shell square 17,' or 16, or whatever it might be, I could see clearly the havoc in the German ranks as the shells would fall. Great groups of men would be blown to atoms and new formations would press in to take their place. The whole horror was there before me, mapped out in numbered squares.

"I dismissed all my men except my orderly of the fourth Zouaves, who wouldn't have gone, anyway. It was a work I could do alone, lying with a sand-bag against my head, my field-glasses in my hand, and before me my field map held down by four sticks. We lay there just under the crest of the hill from two o'clock in the morning until the next afternoon, watching seven attacks. Toward three o'clock I was wounded, and I knew it was only a question of time and chance when I would lie like the dead man at my side, that Dueso had been pressing his feet against, and whose place I had been sent to take. Almost at the same moment I caught sight of Dueso spinning around, holding his elbows to his side, and crying out: '*Nom de Dieu! Nom de Dieu!* I've got it in the arm!'—but trying with the other hand to undo his *cravate*.

"Two jets of blood were now spurting like two faucets from my leg, the big artery was cut. *Ça y est.* In five minutes I'll be dead, I thought, and there came a fainting away and a thinking not on God, but on still untasted joys of the flesh and life—not even on my mother's grief; and waking up after years, it seemed, and calling for water, and Dueso bending over me, after a frantic twisting at his *cravate*, and a frantic pulling and tightening of it about my leg, with one hand and his teeth, and then a pleasant, happy fainting away. A delicious sensation of ease invaded me, and I said to myself, '*Ce n'est que ça, mourir?*' ('Is death

only this?') I have seen so many men die, and whatever their agonies, if long or short, minutes or hours or days, as it may happen, just before dying something gentle and simple takes place."

E. O'S.—"The inevitable dust to dust, the natural law fulfilling itself?"

De G.—"It may be. This *rictus de la mort*, I haven't seen it, though I have heard men screaming and cursing and praying in the trenches as they got their blow, and watched their agonies, but before death something else, softer, always happens. Unless it comes too suddenly. I remember once being on the dunes in Belgium, and against the yellow sand men were sitting in red trousers and *chechias*, and one was telling a tale of laughter when a shell burst. In a moment the blood of his brains was flowing red upon the yellow sand, and then it got blue, and then it sank and was no more, like the laughing man himself from whom it flowed, and his tale of laughter. . . . About nine o'clock we were brought in. Dueso had been lying with his head under my armpit, and his feet still on the dead man, and we would both come out of a faint from time to time and ask for water.

"Dueso! ah, Dueso! for a human being *il est plus chic que moi*. He had been in jail for various reasons not very *chic*, and I was warned against him when I took him for my orderly, but to him I owe my life. Now he is in Salonique, *cité à l'armée*, knows how to live in those regions, hard as nails, originally from Tunis; a dark man, with dark mustache and very big white teeth."

E. O'S.—"One thinks so often how little the common soldier, defending honors and riches that he doesn't share, has to gain. There is nothing for him, in fact,

except to step out into anonymous death; at a given moment to make the sacrifice of his life, or his eyes or his limbs, knowing nothing of war except its horror, rarely any glory, sometimes a mention or a medal, oftener not. But," I continued, after we had sat silent for a while, "who will carry it all on? Few like yourself are left, and it is not enough. France is bleeding white—France, whose sons are heroes, not fathers!"

De G.—"What does it matter if we do go? There are the little ones coming on. It will be like something out of which a whole piece has been cut and the ends must be sewed together. The very old, and the very young, the children, are these ends. We shall have done what we were born to do. This is the immortal history of France that we have made, her *chant du cygne*, too, the most beautiful of her epics and it is enough to have lived for that. To others the carrying on of the generations. . . ."

A pale rose light begins to come in at the window, but sleep cometh not. Fortunately, if need be, I can do without it, but I must close my eyes now. He, too, watching over Israel, slumbers not nor sleeps. . . .

CHAPTER IX

CHÂLONS. — CHÂTEAU DE JEAN D'HEURS. — REVIGNY, THE "LINING" OF THE FRONT

EACH, on comparing notes, was found to have spent the night on the outside of the bed. One of the party, who naturally wishes to remain anonymous, found a *cafard*, the classic cockroach, in her ear toward dawn, and Aurora was welcomed by no hymn of praise from her.

Now we are sitting drinking lemonade on the pavement in front of the abode of iniquity. We have been twice through the hot town, which consists of a modern town around the station, and a picturesque old one on a hill at the back, to find the proper authorities for the stamping of our papers with the military *permis* to go to the château of Jean d'Heurs, belonging to Madame Achille Fould, for luncheon. We caught the major by a hair's breadth; he was disappearing around the corner by the military *commandature* on his bicycle. Then to the *préfecture* for permission to telephone to Châlons for rooms that night; on returning, found Miss M. and Miss N. awaiting us. They have been working at the "Foyer des Alliés" near the station. They want now to get a much-needed canteen in shape at Châlons, and are asking us to help. The word from the colonel of Verdun is an "open sesame," and we will investigate *en route* to Paris.

CHÂLONS

CHÂLONS-SUR-MARNE, *10 o'clock p.m.*

It's been as long as to Tipperary since the scrawl at Bar-le-Duc.

At 11.30 we got into the comfortable motor Madame Fould sent to bring us to Jean d'Heurs' for lunch. It's a beautiful old château of the eighteenth century, given by Napoleon to the Maréchal Oudinot, and in the Fould family since those days, though not lived in until the war by the present generation. It made us feel quite like "folks" as a side-whiskered, highly respectable, rather aged majordomo received us and led us up a broad stairway and showed us into a big library where Madame Fould, her seven *infirmières*, and a young officer were waiting. After that, a perfect lunch in the way of each thing being of the freshest and most delicate and tasting of itself. The young officer was recovering from a wound received at Verdun last September, followed by a trepanning, evidently highly successful, as, in addition to all his senses, he had a thick mat of hair.

The library, to which we returned for coffee, was lined with the most precious books in the most precious bindings, one whole side containing first editions only from Voltaire and J.-J. Rousseau to Châteaubriand and Taine. And I ran my fingers with such a friendly feeling over some soft and lustrous bindings.

The vast spaces of the château are now made into wards, and relays of several hundred men are cared for in them. White hospital beds are pushed against elaborately frescoed walls and Empire gildings. Everything in spotless order. Afterward we went out into the beautiful old park, where convalescent men were sitting or lying about under the great trees. The park is now closed to visitors, the fair sex from neighboring villages having been too generous in their offerings on the altar of Priapus. It's a lovely spot, and Madame

Fould has had her hospital going since the beginning of the war.

At two o'clock we motored into Revigny, accompanied by the handsome young trepanned officer, who deposited us at the military headquarters for the stamping of our safe-conducts. Mrs. C. P., who can put her head through a stone wall, without injuring it, as neatly as any one I ever saw, proceeded to perform the feat, with the result that the major in command gave us all permission for the next *étape*, Châlons. Then Mrs. C. P.'s young son, serving with the American Ambulance, met us, motoring over from Z——; a friend came with him, originally from Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, rather discouraged at the quiet of the *secteur* in which he was stationed. But all he has to do is to wait. Everybody at the front eventually gets what's "coming to him." Mrs. C. P.'s boy had on his *Croix de Guerre*, got for fearless ambulance work at Verdun during one of the big attacks.

Revigny seen from the inside is a hole of holes—but through it defile continually the blue-clad men of France. Twelve thousand had already passed through that day. In the *carrefour* of the road by the station is a ceaseless line of convoys coming from or going to Verdun. This once banal little village has come to have something symbolic about it, though looking, as one passes by, like dozens of other destroyed villages. But inside it is the lining of the war—that thing of dust, fatigue, thirst, hunger, sadness, fear, despondence, hopelessness, running up and down the gamut of spiritual and physical miseries. "Theirs not to reason why." . . .

The English canteen is the only bright spot in the whole place. Those sad-eyed men, like us, love and regret, and are beloved and regretted; women have let them go in fear and dread; and all over Europe it is

the same, east, west, north, and south—all they love they lay down at the word of command. I watched for an hour the blue stream of heavily laden men as they passed in, coming up to the counter with their battered quart cups, drinking their coffee standing, in haste, that the comrade following might be sure to get his drink, the sweat dripping from their faces. Fifteen minutes later a great thunder-storm broke, and thousands of sad-eyed men were huddled together, shelterless, like sheep, suddenly soaked; the hateful dust became the still more hateful mud. I left it all in complete desolation of spirit, and wondering, Is God in His heaven?

Revigny was worse to my spiritual sense almost than the battle-field—there all was consummated. Here the men are still passing up to sacrifice.

CHAPTER X

MONT FRENET.—LA CHAMPAGNE POUILLEUSE.—THE RETURN

CHÂLONS, *10 p.m.*

WE dashed into the train at Revigny during the hail-storm, an infernal kind that didn't cool the air, and arrived at Châlons at six o'clock. No cabs, at least none for us, so we begged two Quaker women with the red-and-white star in the little black triangle on their sleeves, who were getting into the only visible conveyance, to take our luggage and deposit it for us at the Hôtel de la Haute Mère Dieu, whose name so appealed to me. We paid our share of the cab, and all and everything departed, we on foot. Châlons seems quite without character as one passes through the streets, though I caught sight of several old churches and, alone, would have lingered on the busy bridge that spans the Marne. We got to the Hôtel de la Haute Mère Dieu and interviewed the female keeper of that special paradise, who said she had nothing for us, had received no telephone message from the *préfet* at Bar-le-Duc or any other *préfet* from any other place. Then Mrs. C. P.—the Verdun day and the Bar-le-Duc nights having somewhat stretched our nerves—began to get annoyed; the desk-lady finally asked us, did we belong to the Westinghouse Commission, which we didn't. We then betook ourselves to the streets. Nothing at the Hôtel

d'Angleterre, nothing at the Hôtel-Restaurant du Renard. We finally asked a large, beady-eyed, determined-looking female, standing at a door, if she had accommodations or knew of any one who had. She proved to be the *sage-femme* of the quarter and eyed us askance.

Just then appeared a very *comme il faut*, pretty young woman with an expression at once so charming and so modest that we did not hesitate to accost her and tell her of our plight—that it looked as if we should be passing the night *à la belle étoile* if some one didn't do something for us. She hesitated, looked at us, hesitated again. Smashed down on her head at a smart angle was the identical hat that Mrs. C. P. was wearing, blue with a twisting of gray, from Reboux. I think that hat crystallized things, for she ended by saying, sweetly:

"I have a room that I sometimes offer to friends; only," she added, "there is a horrible stairway leading to it."

We turned our backs on the *sage-femme*, doubtless naturally good, but soured by the constant witnessing of the arrival on the scene of apparently superfluous human beings (I say "apparently," for who shall decide which souls are precious?), and followed those neatly clad, small feet and slim ankles up a winding stairway that might have been of any epoch—except the nineteenth or twentieth century, and found ourselves in a charming little interior, spotlessly clean. "*C'est à votre disposition*," she said, and then a servant appeared, a refugee from Tahure, as we afterward learned, a garrulous refugee. I beat my breast later on when I heard the loud bassoon, telling Mrs. C. P. that I even hated refugees and that that one would have, if possible, to contain her tale till I had had a night's sleep. At the

moment I hated her with all the unreasoning hatred of the beneficiary for the benefactor.

Well, to make a long story short, closets were opened, the freshest of embroidered linen sheets, the largest of towels, were got out, and were left to us in the handsomest of ways *with* the refugee, the owner departing to her country house. The refugee managed to get in part of the story of her life and she brought hot water; she was from Tahure and left on the run with an aged husband, just before the entry of the enemy.

Then we looked about the pleasant room. The first object I espied was a pair of manly brown kid gloves, the next a blue gas-mask bag, and a cigarette-case, with a crest, lying near a volume of Alfred de Vigny. (Can't you see them reading it together?) And there was such a comfortable *chaise-longue* for him to rest on, and an expensive, very "comfy" rug and many cushions. As the refugee from Tahure proceeded to make up the bed and sofa she interspersed the story of *her* life with remarks concerning her mistress, like: "*Allez, elles ne sont pas toutes comme cela, elle a un cœur d'or*"; "*Moi, qui vous le dis, elle n'a pas une mauvaise pensée.*"

At this juncture we delicately asked, But where does she *live?* "Oh, he has given her a little château in the environs." This was a convenient town apartment with the one big room giving on the Place de la République; at the back a dining-room and little kitchen. Having removed the dust of travel, hot water being produced in a jiffy from the gas-stove on the kitchen range, we descended to take dinner at one of the restaurants near by. We were so tired about this time that the decalogue wasn't much to us, neither the Law nor the Prophets, but be it remembered of us, we *did* love our neighbor as ourselves.

When we came back after supper the sofa was spread

with large, crisp, spotless linen sheets, the bed the same, the refugee gone, and here we are in this clean, low-ceilinged room with eighteenth-century wood-panelings and charming door-handles of the same period. There is a crayon of the present tenant reflecting her sweet and candid expression over the mantelpiece, on which are two Dresden-china figures and a small white-marble "Young Bacchus"; furthermore an etching by Hellu of the Duchess of Marlborough, which made one feel quite poised. In fact, there is nothing *demi* about it.

The Place de la République is full of soldiers coming and going, and there are several ambulances of the Scottish Ambulance Corps drawn up by a big fountain representing three women (typifying the Marne, the Moselle, and the Agne). Over the soft, warm night is borne the low boom of cannon. The guard has just called out: "*Faites attention! Lumière au troisième étage*"—so I must stop.

Tuesday, 9.30 a.m.

Sitting in the Place de la République on chairs borrowed from a little lace-shop, and waiting for the cab to come to take us to General Goïgoux, to whom Madame Fould had given us a letter of introduction. Just opposite is the inhospitable Hôtel de la Haute Mère Dieu, and I have been telling Mrs. C. P., who has gone to buy some fruit, of the story of Voltaire and Madame du Châtelet passing through Châlons *en route* from Versailles to Lunéville. At Châlons Madame du Châtelet thought she'd like to have a bouillon at the Hôtel de la Cloche d'Or, where they stopped to change horses. (It still exists and is the only one we didn't try last night.) It was brought them to their carriage by the *aubergiste* herself, who had learned from the indiscreet postilion the identity of the illustrious travelers.

When Longchamp, the valet of Voltaire, asks to pay, she firmly demands a louis d'or for the bouillon. "La divine Emilie" protests, the woman insists that at her hotel the "price of an egg, a bouillon, or a dinner is a louis"; then Voltaire gets out and tries by amiable processes to explain that in no country in the world did a bouillon ever cost a louis; more cries and reproaches; a crowd gathers; Voltaire, strong in his right, doesn't want to give way. Madame du Châtelet points out the gathering crowd, now quite noisy. Finally they pay, Voltaire commending to all the devils the hospitable town of Châlons-sur-Marne; they depart to the accompaniment of the gibes of the amiable inhabitants. It may be *autre temps*, but not *autres mœurs;* it's just like the woman at the desk at the Hôtel de la Haute Mère Dieu, who wouldn't take us in, in any sense, last night.

The most awful-looking cab has just drawn up in front of "our" house, and a smart American ambulance officer is trying to get in.

In the Train en Route for Paris.

The first quiet breath I have drawn, and very comfortable it is to sink into the broad seats, out of the glare of the setting sun, and feel there is nothing to inspect save the flying aspect of nature for the next three hours.

The handsome officer this morning proved to be Mr. B., and he didn't get that cab, which, however, we promised to send back to him once we were deposited at the general's headquarters.

General Goïgoux is most agreeable. When he asked us where we were lodged, we threw a stone at the Hôtel de la Haute Mère Dieu and told him of our Good Samaritan. He gave a grin, if generals are supposed to

grin, when we said that we had not disturbed her to any great extent, as she had, in addition, a country place where she really lived. We then told him of our meeting with Miss N. and Miss M., who had asked us to investigate the canteen prospects on our way back to Paris. The installing of one has long been the idea of General Goïgoux, who loves his *poilus*, and he immediately rang the bell on his table—among his books was a German Baedeker of eastern France—and in a moment a captain with a sad face and a black band on his arm appeared, and we departed in a huge military auto to the station to investigate the great railway shed that the general has requisitioned for canteen purposes.

Going through the streets, we were held up for a moment by a detachment of prisoners in various uniforms and from various regiments, but all with P. G. (*prisonnier de guerre*) marked in large letters on their backs. A tall, upstanding set with ringing tread, not at all unhappy-looking, despite a something set about their expression, seemingly in very good physical condition.

Statues of the top-hatted, frock-coated political men of nineteenth-century France have banalized the public places of every town in the *doux pays*. They simply can't compete with the saints and kings and warriors of the artistic periods—it's too bad they have tried.

At 12.30 we got back to our pleasant quarters, to find our hostess there, in a very smart dark-blue serge dress from Jeanne Hallé. In addition to the château, the shop down-stairs, called "Aux Alliés," where all sorts of edible delicacies are sold, belongs to her together with a tall and beautiful red-haired Frenchwoman. This is her up-stairs resting-place during the day. We sank on bed and sofa, exhausted by the heat, the visit to the station to inspect the canteen facilities, which

seemed most promising, visits to two churches, and luncheon in the crowded Restaurant du Renard. In the church of St.-Alpin white-bloused experts were busy removing the beautiful sixteenth-century stained-glass windows. "If 'twere done, 'twere well 'twere done quickly." That continued booming of guns made one realize at once their fragility and their beauty.

Shortly after, a handsome young officer came in, a gentleman, and speaking beautiful English. It wasn't "'he," however, but a friend of his, and we did a little "society" talk—the weather, the necessity of learning the languages young, the theater, that Réjane was getting old, and "*L'Elévation*" was bad for the morals, and fashions, if the skirts *could* get shorter—but nothing of the war.

At two o'clock another military auto was announced, which the general had sent with a doctor to take us to Mont Frenet, four kilometers from Suippes and six from the German lines. The young officer departed; we veiled and gloved ourselves and descended, and got into the motor, where we found a large, dark, military man inclining to *embonpoint*, who thought he was good-looking, and started out. The first thing we met as we got out of town on the dusty, blazing highroad was a little funeral cortége, preceded by a priest. The body of the soldier was draped in the tricolor, and following to his last rest, close behind, was his *camarade*, with head bared. He had doubtless expired in the big hospital near by, one of those lonely hospital deaths that hundreds of thousands have suffered before transfiguration.

We were in the great plain of the Champagne Pouilleuse that leads to Suippes, Sainte-Ménehould, and stretches out to Reims—a plain with great, white, chalky scars of quarries, interspersed with fields and dark patches of pine woods. I asked the doctor about

the site of the ancient camp of Attila and the battle of the Catalonian fields, but his knowledge of the matter was vague and his interest perfunctory. I thought afterward he might have had a more personal afternoon planned than that of taking two objective-minded ladies to Mont Frenet. There was once a great Roman road from Bar-le-Duc to Reims, and all about are little churches of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, mostly touched up in the eighteenth.

After three-quarters of an hour we found ourselves nearing what might have been a modern mining settlement. It is the great front hospital of Mont Frenet. A model establishment organized and conducted by a man of heart and brain, Doctor Poutrain. Young, *élancé*, alert, he took us the rounds of his little world, from the door where the ambulances deposit their wounded, their dying, and oft their dead, where they are sorted out, through the numberless wards, even to the model wash-houses and the places where the garments of those brought in are scientifically separated from their inevitable and deadly live stock.

As we passed through one of the wards, I saw the doctor's eye change, and, following it, I perceived, as he quickly went to the bedside, a face with the death look already on it; and in a moment, with a slight sigh, a soul had breathed itself out—*en route* to the heaven of those who die *pro patria*.

And I thought in great awe, "All I know or ever will know of that human being is his supreme hour." And so fortuitous, so sudden was it all that I had not even time to breathe a word of prayer, nor even to reach out for his hand. And I, come from so far, so unrelated to him, was thus the destined witness of his passing. I can't get it out of my mind.

Doctor Poutrain loves his broken men, and he said,

"I want no man who has been severely wounded or mutilated to leave my hospital without his decoration." He had tears in his eyes as he stood by a bed where a bright-eyed, thin-faced boy was lying with a hip fracture. "He brought a comrade in, under fire, who was shot off his back as he was carrying him in."

In one of the beds an aviator was lying, brought in three days before; the eyes, the mouth, the whole face had still the peculiar look of strain. Indeed, three faces stand out in one's mind—the captivity face, the hard, shining face and eyes of unwounded men just from the combat, and the faces of wounded aviators. About this time I noticed the gloomy look deepening on the face of our accompanying Esculapius, and it suddenly occurred to me "he is one of those who support with difficulty the praises of another." For we *had* been very explicit in praise of Doctor Poutrain's wonderful installation.

It was a slack day, and according to the record in the antechamber there had only been 517 brought in that day.

We have tea with the *directrice* of the *gardes-malades* (ten or twelve women only), a friend of Madame Fould's. As we sat there talking I discovered that the eager *médecin-chef* had had, before the war, as hobby, archeology and ethnology, especially of the prehistoric races of Mexico; that he also possessed one of the few Aztec codices existing—all of which we discussed to the sound of the German guns and the whirring of their airplanes.

We finally made our adieux, came home over the hot, unspeakably dusty road of the Champagne Pouilleuse, unreasonably disappointed that nobody would give us permission to make a little détour by Suippes, then under fire. We got back to our headquarters, packed our belongings, and diffidently brought up the subject

of remuneration, which the *belle châtelaine* firmly refused. I was traveling light, without a single thing approaching the superfluous, but Mrs. P. had a breakfast-cap and her tortoise-shell toilet things and trees for her shoes, and she also found among her belongings a lovely amber box, which she presented in token of our gratitude. We *could* make the garrulous refugee from Tahure not only happy, but speechless, which was more to the point; and here we are, looking out on a darkening world, and there are soldiers bathing in the river, near stacked guns, and everywhere little detachments are marching down dim roads, and there are the eternal troop- and equipment-trains going to the front—and I feel an immense regret at leaving it all. . . .

PARIS.

As we were sitting in the dining-car, idly wondering how on earth we were going to get from the station to our respective abodes once the train had deposited us at the Gare de l'Est, or planning to spend the night there, the Marquis de M. passed through the car. His motor was to meet him, and he gallantly offered transit, that can be above rubies and pearls *par le temps qui court.*

When we got to Paris at 10.30 we saw in the dim light, as we stepped into the big motor, *voyagers* departing with luggage on their backs, or, preparing to await the dawn, sitting on it. We got into the motor with Comte de ——, the Marquis himself sitting outside, "for the air," as he said, and also because there was no more room inside.

As we rolled along through the dimly lighted streets, the air dense and hot, a terrific hail- and thunder-storm suddenly deluged the town, and especially the generous Marquis outside, well punished (as usual) for his kind

act. When, slipping and skidding, we finally pulled up at my hotel, a very wet gentleman, but remembering his manners, said, "*Au plaisir de vous revoir, madame.*" (He must really have wished me to all the devils, where he would never meet me a second time, hoping it was a last as well as a first meeting.) I had to laugh, also he, the pleasure was so evidently doubtful. It ended by his betaking his soaking person into the auto, and I came up-stairs to find my lamps trimmed and burning and my beloved mother awaiting me to hear "all about it."

So may one go to the front and return. . . .

PART II

CHAPTER I

BY THE MARNE

GARE DE L'EST, *Wednesday, July 25th.*

NO, it isn't possible, even for one whose business is not that of stopping bullets, to go toward the combat a second time without a thrill.

Few soldiers in the station; they are mostly at the front, at Craonne and Le Chemin des Dames and other sacrificial places, and in a week or two the empty beds in the hospitals will be full again. Some officers are hastening back from their *permissions* with pasteboard boxes and other unwar-like accoutrements. One is sitting by me, a straight-featured young man with dark-ringed eyes, his *Croix de Guerre* and *fourragère*,[1] reading *Brin de Lilas*. In forty-eight hours he may be dead. Another officer is reading *Cœur d'Orpheline*, and *Le Pays*.

Miss N., with something of serene yet brooding in her being, plus a sense of humor, arrives with a telegraphic pass from army headquarters at Châlons, which may or may not "pass" the train conductor.

Later.

Chelles, where the arts of peace in the form of a vermicelli-factory testify to the arts of war by having every pane of glass broken; and once there was a celebrated abbey at Chelles which was destroyed, with a tidy

[1] Regimental decoration in the form of a cord worn over the left shoulder, passing under the arm.

amount of other things beautiful, at the time of the French Revolution.

Farther along much thinning out of the woods, the beautiful warmth-giving, shade-giving forests of France. In one place there is a planting of young, slender trees, and I thought on those other children of France who must grow to manhood, remake her soul, transmit her immortality. The first harvest is stacked and yellow, and nature is densely, deeply green where it had been pale and expectant. Even the Marne, which we caught up here, has a deeper color than in June, as it reflects the lush green.

Meaux, with its cathedral rising from the center of the town, untouched except by time. Meaux has now come to be a sort of joke ("*de deux maux choisir le moindre*") which few can resist—I've even heard it at the Théâtre Français—and it's supposed to be the heart's desire of the *embusqué*, far enough from the front not to get hurt, and far enough from Paris to be out of sight.

Château Thierry, with its first vintage of white grapes, and I bethought me how the whole of France is one vast wine-press—"He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored."

Epernay, with its peculiar church tower. The great building of the champagne Mercier firm near the station has every window-pane broken, and part of it is serving as a Red Cross station. The wave of invasion pressed hard through Epernay that August of 1914.

In the dining-car we sat at a table with two officers—an airman, tall, deep-eyed, some sort of *tic nerveux* disturbing his face, with the *Grand' Croix de la Légion d'Honneur* among other decorations; and a captain of infantry, who had been months at Arras, and at Verdun the terrible March of 1916.

About the time that the cross-eyed waiter (it was easy, poor soul, to see why he wasn't wanted in the trenches) threw the last set of plates with a deafening crash down the line of diners (the captain of infantry said it was just like the first-line trenches), the airman, whose nerves couldn't stand it, pursued, rather irritably:

"You don't even read the *communiqués* any more, I wager. *Oh, les civils!*"

"I can't truthfully say I do, always," I answered, feeling called on to defend the *sacrés civils.* "After three years of it we are fatigued and bewildered by the spectacularness of it, the great, dazzling, hideous mass of it, and you who perish on the battle-field but perform an act that all must some day perform, only different in that it is far better done—*dulce et decorum*—but, after all, the same act that we must perform against our will, at the mercy of some accidental combination. It's the same outcome, 'and one's a long time dead.'"

After a pause and a deep look, perhaps it is the look men have when alone in the secular spaces, he answered:

"*Choisir et aimer sa mort, c'est un peu comme choisir sa bien-aimée,*" and suddenly a flash illuminated my soul, showing me something of the *dulce* as well as the *decorum* of dying for country.

And then we looked out of the window, and there came into my mind a completely commonplace event that caught my attention in the first wonderment and horror of the world war. Accompanied by her daughter, an elderly woman, one August evening of 1914, took the Fifth Avenue motor-bus to get some fresh air, and they placed themselves on top. At that epoch, instead of going straight up the Avenue, which was being repaved around about Thirty-fifth Street, the omnibus took a turn into Madison Avenue and reappeared again at

the north side of Altman's. Now the roof of the *porte-cochère* of Altman's has a *motif* of bronzework. The omnibus lurched just at this point; the head and hair of the old lady were caught in it; she was lifted up from the top of the omnibus, remained suspended in air for an instant of time, then dropped to the pavement, where she breathed out her soul. Doubtless there are those who will understand why this completely unimportant matter has remained in my mind—even why I thought of it at that moment.

CHÂLONS-SUR-MARNE,
36 RUE DU PORT DE MARNE.

An 1860 house requisitioned by the military authorities for the *Dames de la Cantine*.

6.30 p.m.

Sitting in a little glass-inclosed veranda even with the ground. The side against the house, in between the doors and windows, is painted in a crisscross pattern of dark green against light green, and the woodwork is that favorite but uninspiring shallow brown; a large, empty, double-decker cage for birds is in a corner. The veranda leads into two low-ceilinged rooms with parquet flooring and little squares of Brussels carpet. In the first is a writing-table, some arm-chairs, and a horsehair sofa is across a corner; brown wall-paper ornamented with the inevitable oil-paintings of "near" Corots, and "farther" Guido Renis—everything distinctly early Victorian, and something soothing in its atmosphere after three lustrums of *art nouveau*. After all we've been through in art lately, early Victorian isn't as bad as we once thought.

I looked for a moment into the walnut bookcase and found bound volumes of *La Semaine des Familles*, 1850–60; *Le Musée des Familles* of the same dates: *Le*

Magasin d'Education, of the eighties; and the curious part is that here beside the Marne it doesn't seem of any special country, but of a special period.

The kitchen leads out of the dining-room (which latter is the spiritual twin of the *salon*), and has an old, unused fireplace with a high masonried shelf above it and a beautiful ancient fireback with coat of arms. Near the high window is a little range and the inevitable gas-stove. I put my valise in the sitting-room and went out into the old garden, untouched since the winter's sleep and the spring's awakening. It looks out on the road; beyond is a raised walk along the river, and across the stream, just opposite, is the station and the evacuation hospital.

But I was feeling uneasy as I looked about, for I was separated from my *carnet rouge*,[1] which has been unnecessarily reft from me by a too-zealous station individual. Miss Mitchell had met us, smiling and waving, which ought to have been a patent of respectability, from the other side of a bayonet, the side we wanted to be on; but the man had a dullish eye and didn't see that we were birds of a feather, and, anyway, had just been put in authority and was enjoying his full powers, after the usual manner of the unaccustomed.

So I departed, and got sopping wet in my only suit (am traveling lighter even than the first time), and my garments were furthermore ravaged by falling pollen from a linden-tree under which I had confidingly stood during the downpour. I was a sight, but I *had* to get that *carnet rouge*. Any one who has been in *la zone des armées* and has been separated from it will understand the orphaned and anxious feeling that possessed me.

[1] The *sauf-conduits* for the army zones are in the form of little, red, paper-bound books.

Later.

A pale brightening of the western sky after the heavy rain. Two *avions de chasse* passing swiftly to the northeast. I wandered out of the garden, past some modern houses (this part of Châlons, for some reason, is called Madagascar), taking the little raised earth-walk by the Marne. The river, always slow-flowing, has an almost imperceptible movement in front of our house, and there are many grasses and reeds; the banks are weedy and little green boats are made fast to them, and nature is a bit motley and untidy. A soldier is fishing on the opposite side near the station. An officer and a black-robed woman pass. Farther down, the banks are thickly wooded and the trees glisten after the rain; even the great railway station is a-shine, where tens of thousands of men pass daily, together with millions of francs of war material, and it all looks like some not very sharp wood-cut of the sixties — the kind you wouldn't buy if you were looking over a lot; but, somehow, lived in, it is charming. Then I found myself on a path by the river, with a lush border of trees, poplar, willow, white birch, ash, hawthorn, and clematis-twined, wild-grape-vined bushes. On the other side were ripe wheat-fields. Near a sycamore a man and a woman were locked in an embrace, whether of greeting or farewell I know not. Neither was very young—this much I saw before I turned my eyes and went on; but when I passed there again they were as before, their eyes still closed; and I suddenly knew them for true lovers, who count not moments, but were lost in some infinity; and for all I know they may be there yet, and if not they, then others, for the spaces of love are never empty. To some it may be nonsense that I am talking, but there are those who will know. All the while there was a dull boom of cannon, and other men who could love women

were giving up their lives; and I seemed to understand little or nothing, but did not need to understand, for I had a full heart, which is better than a full brain. And I cried, as I walked back, "*Domine Deus, Rex Celestis, Pater omnipotens,*" and left it all—the soft love and the hard death — where it belongs. And I was glad to have walked for a few moments alone by the green Marne.

When I got back I found Joseph of the 71st *Chasseurs à pied* sitting with Miss N. Joseph thinks we are friends; he *knows* we are friends, so different from "world's" people, who are suspicious and think nobody loves them, or fatuous and think everybody does.

We sat in the 1860 dining-room. There is a pressed-bronze clock on the mantelpiece, representing a mild and smiling Turk with a drawn sword—and there is a side-board you could find in Barnesville, Maryland, or Squedunk (I forget *where* Squedunk is), and the extremely "distant" Guido Renis decorate the brown walls, without, however, enlivening them.

And this is Joseph's story—Joseph of the grateful heart, Joseph with two years and a half of service, Joseph who won't be twenty till December, Joseph with his young, round face and flat nose, dark under his pleasant eyes, and a bit hollow under his cheek-bones, and with decorations on his chest:

"I never knew my parents; the Fathers brought me up. I have had only good from them, and when they were *chassés* I was taken with them to Pisa. I was going to continue my studies, *mais la guerre, que voulez-vous?* They call me '*le gosse,*' I was the youngest in the regiment. Now I am alone in the world since my brothers were killed, one at Verdun three weeks ago, the other last year on the Somme. I miss the letters," he added, simply.

"But, Joseph, tell us how you got your *Croix de Guerre*."

"Oh, I only happened to save the life of my captain at Verdun. We were making a reconnaissance, and he fell with a ball in the hip. I started to bring him in, with a comrade who was hit by a piece of shrapnel in the head and killed instantly. I caught 'mine' in the arm, but I was still able to drag my captain in by his feet. It was quite simple, and since then he is very good to me."

Joseph is *en perm*, his regiment is at Reims, but he spits blood and his voice is hoarse—he was gassed a few weeks ago.

"It smelt of violets," he said, "and we didn't know that anything was the matter till an officer rushed toward us. Eight of us never got up. I'll never speak clearer than this."

Joseph stayed to supper with us—a supper of *soupe à l'oseille*, scrambled eggs, and salad, but the brown, dull, little room gradually seemed to fill with a sifted glory, and we left our meal and went out to find the whole world dipped in transparent pink, and the great Light of Day about to disappear, a reddish ball, in a mass of color of an intenser hue. The delicate willows were like silver candelabra reflected in the Marne, which now was a satiny pink. The wheat-fields were seas of burnished gold.

Over all a terrific boom of cannon was borne on the damp evening air. It seemed impossible to do other than walk magnetically on and on toward the dreadful sound, out of that world of surpassing beauty toward those supreme agonies, toward Mourmelon and Reims, where men were laying down their lives, even as we three women walked the fields at the sunset hour. I remembered suddenly a picture known and loved years ago—

a woman kneeling by such a river-bank, her hair falling, her face buried in her hands, called "*Hymnus an die Schönheit*," but over the pink-and-silver beauty of *my* sunset world I heard the deep and dreadful tones of *their* cannon, and the answer of the 75's, which Joseph likened to the *miaulement d'un chat*—and all the world seemed askew, and I looked through tears at a golden half-moon that was rising in the pink to add an unbearable beauty to it all.

In my room, *10.30 p.m.*
The cannon still booming.

My room also has a dark-brown paper with great white flowers on it—some cross between peonies and dahlias, if such union is possible—and heavy mahogany furniture; a few books which I immediately investigated, on a gimp and tasseled trimmed shelf, for a clue to the one-time dwellers. Among them were two by Victor Tissot, *Le Pays des Milliards* and *Les Prussiens en Allemagne;* the dates were 1873 and 1875, and they told of that other war; and I looked at Germany through the eyes of forty years ago as I turned the pages of *Le Pays des Milliards*, listening to the 1917 guns. History was not only repeating itself, but tripping itself up!

Joseph is sleeping in the garden in the steamer-chair. I hear his gas-cough, a cross between a croupy cough and a whooping-cough. We wanted him to sleep inside, but he said "*J'étouffe*," and took the steamer-chair out under the spreading chestnut-tree, and sleeps the sleep of youth, even though weary and gassed.

Thursday, 26th July, 1.30 p.m.

Sitting in the garden, after lunch, where we have had coffee under the spreading chestnut, ready to go to Bar-le-Duc. *Avions* are whirring in the perfect blue,

and we plainly hear the cannon. We are to take night shift at the little *Foyer des Alliés*. When I say that we carry nothing with us, not more than if we were going to take a stroll about town, one sees that the journey will be fairly elemental.

Many white butterflies with an unerring instinct for beauty are flying in and out of the little white ash-tree. And in spite of the boom of cannon there straightway came to me a dear and fugitive realization that beauty is the first thing sought by instinct, its earliest and its last love, its imperishable means and its end. And how every other seeking of instinct comes after perpetuation, conservation, survival of the strong, and how it accompanies and pushes the soul toward its transfiguration.

Suddenly, under the rustling chestnut, all about me the murmur of the gently stirring garden, I found I was mad for beauty, and some liquid, long, unrepeated lines came to me, I know not why:

E il pino
ha un suono, e il mirto
Altro suono, e il ginepro
Altro ancora, stromenti
diversi
Sotto innumerevoli dita.
. . . . . .
Che l'anima schiude
novella,
Su la favola bella
Che ieri
M'illuse, che oggi l'illude,
O Ermione.[1]

When you're not carrying anything with you except your money and your safe-conduct, you *can* dream till it's time to take the train.

[1] "*La Pioggia nel Pineto.*"—D'Annunzio.

CHAPTER II

THE CANTEEN AT BAR-LE-DUC

Epitaphe

Bénis ceux qui sont morts simplement: en victimes,
Et n'ayant de la guerre éprouvé que l'horreur.
Bénis ceux qui sont morts sans nourrir en leur cœur
La haine et tous ses maux, la gloire et tous ses crimes.

Bénis ceux qui sont morts comme ils avaient vécu:
Assidus noblement à de modestes tâches.
Bénis ceux qui, n'étant ni très braves, ni lâches,
N'ont su que résigner leur corps pauvre et vaincu.

Bénis ceux qui sont morts pour servir et défendre
Des honneurs et des biens dont ils n'ont point leur part.
Bénis ceux qui se sont donnés sans rien attendre
De leur postérité, de l'histoire ou de l'art.

Bénis ceux qui, luttant seulement pour la vie,
Ont ignoré les lois qui reposent sur eux,
Mais compris en mourant qu'ils sont les malheureux
En qui depuis toujours Jésus se sacrifie.

Bénis, ils le sont tous, et saints entre les morts,
Ceux qu'on ne pleure guère et que nul ne renomme:
Car, devant les héros, ils ne sont rien que l'Homme;
Car, parmi tant de gloire, ils fondent le remords;

Car leur don si naïf, ce don de tout leur être,
Mêle aux vertus du sol les grâces d'un sang pur,
Pour composer, avec tout l'or du blé futur,
Les moissons d'un esprit dont l'Amour sera maître.

GEORGES PIOCH.

CHÂLONS, *27th July.*

Half past four. Half an hour ago, *alerte*, *sirènes*. We hastily arose from resting, and have just come up from a really charming cellar, with nice vaulting, evidently much older than the house itself.

Returned from Bar-le-Duc this morning rather sketchy in my mind, blurred with fatigue, in a compartment with five silent, dead-tired officers. It's a great human document, night shift in a canteen. From ten o'clock till six I watched the *poilus* fill the *Foyer des Alliés*, in and out, in and out. From time to time the voice of the station-master called out some fateful destination. I was thankful for any momentary slackening of the rush, so that when one gives coffee, chocolate, or bouillon one can also give a word, the precious word, where all is so anonymous. Between three and four there was a lessening, and a short, haggard, deep-eyed, scraggy-mustached man of forty-six, leaning on the counter, said to me, "I am father of five," and, showing his blue trousers tucked in his boots, added, "I am of the attacking troops." He then shifted his accoutrement and dug out from his person the photographs of the five children and his *épouse*, and I think more and more, "it is for the young to fight." I can't bear the look on the faces of the middle-aged going up to battle.

The *poilu* trying to find his purse or the photographs of his family, among everything else in the world that he carries on his person, pressed tightly against other men carrying the same, feels doubtless the way a sardine trying to turn over would feel!

The next with whom I spoke was a *gaillard* with a glancing blue eye, reddish mustache and high color, from Barcelona, of French parents, and he insisted on speaking Spanish with me. His brother is professor at Saint-Nazaire.

"Every time he writes me it is about Mr. Lloyd George instead of about the family."

This is a delicate tribute to my supposed English nationality.

"Do you think we are going to win, señorita?"

"Of course," I answer, "with the help of God. *Dios y victoria*," I add, piously.

But as he tosses off his coffee he says, with a gleam, "*Victoria y Dios*," and then gives way to a comrade who was at Craonne in April.

He was a man with a softish eye and full-lipped mouth and was probably naturally flesh-loving, and wanted his coffee very hot, and looked approvingly at me as I said:

"*Mon ami*, I know all about it, if coffee isn't *too* hot, it isn't hot enough."

He ended a conversation about an engagement he had been in by saying: "The most awful sensation is to see the dust raised by the mitrailleuses and to know that you have got to walk into it and to see the men ahead of you stepping with strange steps—and some falling."

As I said, he was naturally ease-loving and pain-fearing, yet that is the way *his* dust may be called on to return to dust.

There are many jokes about shrapnel and shells, but nobody ever jokes about a bullet. It's a thing with a single purpose—and you may be it.

Our headquarters are at ——, not far away, and it was at Bar-le-Duc that I first saw our own men among the French for the same strange purpose. Something stirred deeply in my heart, with an accompanying searing, scorching consciousness of what an elemental thing they have come across the seas to do—quite simply kill or be killed. It's all to come, for "He hath loosed the

fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword," and it is for the young to fight.

At 3.30 they come into the canteen and ask for eighteen fried eggs; they are oozing with money, and *they* aren't feeling sentimental. One of the four young spread-eagles (he proved to be from Texas, and was changing a big plug of tobacco from one side of his mouth to the other) said, with an appraising look at the counter, that he could "buy us out," and a second added, "And more, too."

"How about those coming in later?" I suggest, and then I ask how long they've been here.

"Been here? Just five hundred years," a small one answers, promptly, "and the next time the 'Call' comes they won't get me. They can take the house and the back fence, too, but they won't get little Joe. This loving another country's one on me!"

"Don't listen to him, lady; he's homesick. We're out to can the Kaiser, and he'll take some canning yet, but I say next July he will be about as welcome as a skunk at a lawn-party."

And then even the homesick one cheered up. The simile made me think of summer evenings in New England, but I only asked when they were to go back to ——.

"We ought to have been there at 10.15."

I gave a stern glance at the big canteen clock. The hands pointed to 3.30. They were then five and a quarter hours late.

"You don't know '*Gun*court.' It's a fierce place," said one, in answer to the look.

"Aren't you busy?"

"Holy smoke! She says *are we busy!* Why, we dig ourselves in all day, and we dig ourselves out all night, and somebody after you all the time. I don't call this war. We're out for real trouble."

"Well, you'll get it when you see your officer," I remarked, unfeelingly.

Just then a *poilu* whom they seemed to know approached with his ten centimes. One of the Sammies knocks it out of his hand onto the counter, points to his own chest, says, "On me, a square meal," and opens his bursting purse for me to take whatever is necessary.

The *poilu*, hearing the chink of coin and rustle of paper, says to me, with eyes the size of saucers, "*Sont-ils tous millionaires?*" . . .

Apart from his "private resources," which seem unlimited, the American receives just twenty times a day what the Frenchman does.

But how my heart goes out to them, so young, so untried, so generous—and a sea of blood awaiting them!

Toward morning, when a chill was in the air, a thin-faced, dark-eyed man with glasses shiveringly drinks his hot chocolate. "It's too long, the war," he says, "two years—even three—*mais cela traîne trop, nos bonnes qualités s'usent et se perdent.*"

"What were you before the war?"

"My father has a book-shop at Chartres, *j'adorais les livres et une bonne lampe*," he added, so simply.

And then a trench-stained comrade came up to him and they talked after this fashion—one couldn't have done better oneself—while I mopped up the counter and refilled my jugs:

"This country pleases me. I will come back and take a turn about after the war."

"*Mon vieux*, one should never return to a place where one has been happy; one is apt to find only regrets and disillusions. You are thinking of the young *boulangère* here, but she herself will leave the town after the hostilities! And then what? *Un seul être vous manque et*

tout est dépeuplé! But nothing, however, counsels one to return to a place where one has suffered."

From this point of view one must say that the life of the *poilu* is ideal, for when he will have tried all the fronts, including those of the Orient, the war will perhaps be over.

And then they slung everything except the kitchen stove on their persons, and, thanking me, went out to be killed, or, in the very best event, to get *la bonne blessure.*

One in a thousand, one in ten thousand gets it, *la bonne blessure*, indeed, not disfiguring, not incapacitating, and afterward, sometimes, decorations, honors. On the other side they say, "*Glück muss der Soldat haben.*"

A strange, intense blue, like some outer curtain to the windows, announced the coming of dawn, and out of it appeared nine men shivering.

"Why are you so cold?" I ask.

"*Il fait du brouillard,*" said one, with a beard in a point and wearing a *béret*, such a man as would have gone into an inn of Rabelais's time, *en route* for some seat of war; and as he drank his big bowl of chocolate he added, "*Cela console;* toward dawn one's courage is low."

Then a young, stone-deaf man with blue eyes and delicate, pink-skinned face came in with something vague and searching in his look. I didn't realize in the first moment what was the matter, as I asked, did he want coffee or chocolate, but a comrade pointed to his ears and said, "Verdun." He himself smiled, a dear young smile, but sudden tears came to my eyes and I slopped the coffee.

A little before six we closed the canteen, which is always swept and garnished between six and seven, and went back to the house where Miss Worthington, who

so admirably runs it in conjunction with Miss Alexander, lives.

I lay me on a sofa with my shoes unlaced—my feet by that time were feeling like something boneless and bruised, mashed into something too small.

Seven-thirty a great knocking at the door.

"*L'alerte! A la cave, madame!*"

I was then in a state where a bomb couldn't hurry me, but, the knocks continuing, I finally got up and went down-stairs to find the lower floor full of people, too *blasé* to go into the vaulted cellar below.

"*Quelle comédie!*" said one woman. "*Moi, je m'en vais.*"

"*Quelle tragédie, si c'est pour vous cette fois,*" answered another, pressing her baby to her breast.

"The bits of shrapnel from the anti-aircraft guns firing at the aeroplanes make more victims than the bombs," said another.

Miss Worthington appeared at that moment, but decided, however, to go back to bed. I went out into the hot streets; the early sun was shining in a faultless sky. The *Foyer des Alliés* had been hastily evacuated at the *alerte*, according to orders, so I asked for the nearest church, where I could sit down in peace, or comparative peace, out of the glare and the heat, not to mention the enemy airplanes. I was directed up the principal street, told to turn down by the river, and was proceeding under the dusty poplars to the church of St.-Jean, when suddenly some beauty of the morning touched my face and a feeling almost of joy succeeded the fatigue of the night. I was turned from thoughts of men going to their doom, and destruction coming from the lovely sky, and I could receive only the morning light, and the glory of the shining river and the rolling hills was for the moment mine; and I saw how "dying, they are not dead." . . .

Mass was over when I got to church, but I sat down, crossed myself, and commended, with a suddenly quiet heart, the world of battle to its God, and then, instead of *un*lacing my shoes in the sanctuary, I proceeded to lace them *up*, having walked from my abode with the laces tied about my ankles; it wasn't as sloppy as it sounds, considering what was going on overhead. But I found myself thinking of praying-carpets, and rows of sandals outside of dim mosques, and things and ways far from Bar-le-Duc.

After twenty minutes of a somewhat hazy contemplation of other than war mysteries, I went back to the canteen.

Betwixt the time I had left it and my return a bomb had fallen between it and the station; a large piece of roof had been removed from the station, and a very neat nick had been made in the corner of the canteen where we kept our hats and coats and hung up our aprons. The street in between looked like an earthquake street. I stood quite still for a second of time—not thinking—you don't think on such occasions. The Barrisiens, or, in plain English, the Bar-le-Dukites, were engaged in business as usual.

I then began the cutting up and buttering of endless large slices of bread, with a Scotchwoman, who has unmodifiable opinions about Americans — any and all Americans. Even when she only remarks, "I saw two new people in town yesterday, *very* American-looking, *very*," you feel there's something the matter with the States, and if you had time you'd get argumentative, even perhaps annoyed.

Soldiers were coming in again. To one tired, deep-eyed man, sitting listlessly, with the heavy load slipping, I said:

"*Vous avez le cafard,*[1] *mon ami?*"

And he answered, suddenly, as if the words had been ejected by a great force from his soul:

"*Je monte demain*—and I can't bear the sound the bayonet makes going in."

I answered, "A hot cup of coffee and you will feel all right again." But to myself I said, "There'll be trouble for him; he *can't* any more."

And then a huge Senegalese, all spinal column and hip, waving a generous five-franc note in his hands, came along and wanted to know if there was anybody *bas mariée* among the ministrants, as he had a day off. The service is quite variegated, as will be seen from these random specimens.

Last night we walked up the hill of the ancient town. A yellow half-moon, hanging behind the fourteenth-century tower, further decorated the scene. We sat on

[1] In *L'Horizon* I found these lines from Verlaine, with a few added, concerning *le Cafard*, by "Bi Bi Bi":

Quelle est cette douleur
Qui pénètre mon cœur?
C'est bien la pire peine
De ne savoir pourquoi
Sans amour et sans haine
Mon cœur a tant de peine.
En effet, cher Verlaine,
C'est bien la pire peine
Que ta fameuse peine
Et les poilus sans art
La nomment le Cafard.

But *le Cafard* differs from Verlaine's *peine* in that it is a very special kind of world-pain, and very complete; for those in its grip know *why*, as well as *not* why, they suffer. The memory of loved and early things, very probably not to be known again, is part of it. The consciously unreasonable hope that all will be well in an extremely uncertain future is another part of it—and underlying it is crushing physical fatigue, sleeplessness, hunger, cold, heat, the whole smeared in the blood of brothers and foes, the dull reaction after killing, or escape from being killed—one can't feel that there is anything vague about *le Cafard*.

immemorial steps, in a little V-shaped place that framed the valley and the town, and talked of war and wars. I thought how the legendary Gaul had wandered over these hills and these wooded stretches, with his battle-ax and skin about him, and long-haired women had waited his return, and children had played in front of caves. As the clock on the tower struck nine a woman appeared, waving her arms and calling out, "*Une incendie!*" and we went higher up the steps and saw masses of smoke and flames on one of the hills. It was the huge barracks for refugees that was burning, and the flames were blowing toward the near-by encampment for German prisoners. Then we went down the ancient roadway through the dim, warm, summer streets to the canteen overflowing with blue-clad men, singing, drinking, disputing. A blue mist of smoke and breath hung about them, with a smell of hot wool and worn leather—and it was the war. As I put on my apron I found myself repeating the words:

Bénis ceux qui sont morts simplement: en victimes,
Et n'ayant de la guerre éprouvé que l'horreur.
Bénis ceux qui sont morts sans nourrir en leur cœur
La haine et tous ses maux, la gloire et tous ses crimes.

CHAPTER III

THEATRICALS AND CAMOUFLAGE

27th July, evening.

THIS afternoon Lieutenant Robin fetched us to the theatrical representation the *Division Marocaine* was to give.

Generals thick as leaves in Vallombrosa were there in a hemicycle about the stage, pressed close by the flood of *poilus*. Terrible heat in the great, glass-roofed auditorium, a slanting afternoon sun pouring itself in like hot gold. Some thousands of spectators; thick odor of *poilu;* blind being led in; groups of one-legged men naturally gravitating to one another; groups of one-armed the same. A few *gardes-malades* from the hospitals, and ourselves the only women in the audience.

We were presented at the door with some copies of a charming, really literary newspaper, *L'Horizon, Journal des poilus*, and there was a little paragraph, "*Hiérarchie française qu'on trouve au Théâtre des Armées*," which also described the protocol of seating, "In the first row near the stage wounded men are lying, immediately behind them wounded men are sitting, then come ladies, if there are any—and then come officers!" General Goïgoux and General Abbevillers sat near us.

While waiting we looked at *L'Horizon* and laughed with General Goïgoux over a paragraph showing the philosophy of a son of Mars under certain circumstances, and it was the following:

Nature is kind. She places the remedy near the ill and often cures, as one has seen, evil by evil.

A woman, too much loved, sent me a letter so cruel that I didn't even have the strength to tear it up, but carried it around in my pocket for weeks.

One night, being quartered in a stable, I took my coat off and hung it up.

The next day, no letter. A cow had eaten it. Nature is kind.

When General Gouraud, first in command, entered, the "Marseillaise" sounded, a thrill went through the vast assemblage, and we all arose. *Le Lion d'Orient* is tall, intensely straight, his whole thin, khaki-clad body on parallel lines with his perpendicular armless right sleeve. Long, straight, brown hair *en brosse*, bronzed skin. His entry was a thing not to be forgotten. I wondered "Is it the East that stamps great chiefs with such majesty, that can give them such calm?" and I thought of Gallipoli—blue seas, battles, wounds, hospital ships. Then the curtain rose on one of the most delightful theatrical representations I have ever seen, screamingly funny, and quite chaste.

But all that *entrain*, all that life, to be snuffed out tomorrow or the next day, or the next? At Craonne or Reims or Verdun or wherever it may be? And how natural that they should sing of love and women, and say witty things concerning food and raiment and the government, till the end!

After the performance, during which nobody had ever been so hot before, the sun moving across the hall and grilling each row in turn, we passed out in a great jam of *poilus*. One huge man, with the thickest of meridional accents and red cheeks, and eyes like two black lanterns, and a coal-black beard, was gesticulating at a small, hook-nosed, blond man.

"*Le Midi, le Midi—qu'est-ce que tu en sais, toi, bêta?*

Les Anglais t'ont déjà pris ton trou de Calais, aussi je te demande, sale type, what army corps took the *plateau de Craonne*" and he burst into a great laugh of triumph. Then, borne on the blue waves, we found ourselves in the open air and realized what we had been breathing.

General Goïgoux presented us to General Gouraud standing by his motor with several other generals, while a squad of German prisoners, looking out of the corners of their eyes, were being marched by. His mien was dignity itself, and out under the sky one was even more conscious of that harmony of browns and straight lines, that something remote yet majestic in his being. As we turned to go I saw him speaking to a blind zouave, and he pressed his hand lingeringly on the man's shoulder. *Oh, enfants de la patrie!*

Saturday, July 28th, 10.30 a.m.

All last night the strange, recurring, sinister sound of the *sirènes* over the plain of Châlons, and it seemed to me like cries of men of the Stone Age.

These two days I have been haunted by ghosts of beings of the twilight ages; elusive emanations, dim suggestions of their psychologies have at moments possessed me in this city of the Catalaunian Plains.

Rested in my pink-silk wrapper, dead tired—too tired to care whether "they" got here or not—and stayed in bed during the *alertes*, but I thought of airmen, attackers and defenders, in the soft summer sky, a golden half-moon lighting a dim heaven.

Dreamed, but only in snatches, of peace and the ways of peace.

At 4.30 I heard Joseph's gas-bark and knew he was again with us, stretched out on the *chaise-longue* under the chestnut-tree.

As I stood at the window my thoughts went twisting

about the stars of the gorgeous night that was so soon to give way to another summer day, and I suddenly saw human beings, only as tiny specks, everywhere going forth at some word of command to their doom. There was a flinging back of my thoughts upon me, and I turned from my window, as suddenly the chill of early dawn and the boom of cannon came in, and I could see nothing for tears and I knew the beauteous earth for what it is—the abode of mad horrors.

Later.

Paid my respects to General Goïgoux for an instant of time (I can always get out quickly) in the old gray house of the Rue Grande Étape, and found him as always, *distingué*, human, untired, cordial. Officers passing in and out of his room, and the walls tapestried with maps. Later Colonel Rolland of the 1st Zouaves, very jaunty in his red fez, adoring his men and adored by them, and flicking his leg with a short cane having a deadly knife on a spring in the top, took us to the railroad station, to inspect the great, dreary sheds that with time, labor, and much energy are to become *La Cantine Américaine*. Blue-clad men were lying around like logs in inert bundles on the earthen floor. One had to step over legs and motley equipment to get anywhere. A dreadful sound of hammering was echoing through the vast spaces, without, however, seeming to disturb the slumbers of those men, and I dare say was as a lullaby in comparison to the first-line trenches.

We stepped into the kitchen. A smiling, twinkling-eyed *cuistot* [1] who probably had something awful the matter with him—flat-foot or hernia or something of the kind, or he wouldn't have been there—with pride asked us to partake of some of his coffee. He proceeded to

[1] Cook.

dip it from a great, steaming caldron, pouring it into worn tin cups carefully wiped first on his much-used apron. My soul responding to echoes of fraternity enabled me to drink with a smile, which, though it started out rather sickly, behaved all right as I returned the cup with compliments. The *cuistot* said he hoped the *cantine* would soon be in order, and as he looked through the small opening through which he shoved the cups to the *poilus*, rendered still smaller by piles of bread and festoons of sausage, he added, "*Les têtes de ces dames seront plus consolantes que la mienne.*" He was a nice, human *cuistot*, though no lover of water except for making coffee, and then, as we fell into conversation, he added, "*Si la guerre pouvait finir; mais il y a un fossé de dignité et personne des deux côtés n'ose le sauter.*" These *poilus* are astounding!

We then visited Lieutenant Tonzin, who is going to decorate the *cantine* as never *cantine* was decorated. He was at the camouflage grounds. As one knows, camouflage is *de l'art de la guerre le dernier cri*, but the grounds were discreetly veiled from public gaze, and we were directed into a little garden, green-treed and sun-flecked. In it was a trestle with a large, very clever, plaster cast of a *camion* taking *poilus* somewhere; they were hanging from every possible place except the wheels, just such a sight as one constantly sees on the roads near the front.

The gayest sounds of whistling and singing issued from the rather coquet sun-flooded house behind the garden. Several other young artists appeared on hearing women's voices, loving life, adoring art with a new adoration, and who with something of wonder and much of thankfulness found themselves for a sweet, brief space in charge of the camouflage work, with brush and chisel again in hand instead of bayonets.

We looked at the designs for the *cantine* decorations, quite charming—but we delicately suggested suppressing the figure of a too fascinating "mees" that was to embellish the entrance and point to the *poilus* the way to those delights. We feared some confusion of thought.

Afterward went to church at Notre Dame, and, sitting there, drew my first quiet breath in Châlons, out of the hot streets. Beautiful music rolling through the gray, antique vaulting. A white bier near the altar; some beloved child was being laid away from sight and hearing and touch and earthly hope. As I looked about the lovely gray spaces I remembered how in *La Cathédrale* Huysmans says the length symbolizes the patience of the Church during trials and persecutions; the width, that love which dilates the heart; and the height, our aspirations and our hopes—and some speechless gratitude overflowed my soul because of being one of the enduring community to whom, through the gorgeous, terrible ages, nothing human is foreign. I had a strange, complete sensation of brotherhood and I saw us all of the great laughing, weeping caravan, winding through the desert, and the Church compassionate the spot of living waters. And how "men must endure their going hence, even as their coming hither. Ripeness is all." . . .

On the same site had once been a pagan temple, and on its altar was the figure of a Virgin, and at her feet were graven the words, "*Virgini Parituri*" ("to the Virgin who shall bring forth"). And it had come to pass.

The most precious of the old windows have lately been put out of harm's way, but the ogival tops remain with their jewels of medieval reds and blues; and on each side, as one looks through the lovely gray vaulting,

are delicate windows of a later epoch, with designs in fawn and green and yellow.

As I came out behind the mourners following the little white bier, I noticed again with a sinking of the heart the revolutionary defacement of the splendid portals. Men in all ages have had seasons of madness, wherein they destroyed whatever mute and unresisting beauty was within their reach.

Again through the hot streets—an epic in themselves of war, dust, sun, blue-clad men, blue-gray automobiles, gallooned officers, and I realized among other things that without uniforms war would be impossible.

Bought *Le Champ de Bataille de l'Epopée*, also *Le Mannequin d'Osier*, out of a huge stock of Anatole France's books, who is evidently a favorite here. I passed through the old courtyard of the museum, hermetically sealed *depuis la campagne*, as the porter told me when I sought his lodge, from which the most savory of noonday smells was issuing. Uninteresting and entirely beside the point, Buddhist sculptures fill one side of the court, and then, passing through the portal of a seventeenth-century church, transported there when the church itself was being done away with, one finds oneself in a narrow passage on the walls of which are hung quaint old fire-backs, *plaques de foyer*. The first is of the eighteenth century, "*l'amour désarmé*" (love was nearly always disarmed in those days), and this one represented Cupid supporting a languorous lady. "*Le retour du marché*" of Louis XVI depicted a housewife returning with a full basket on her arm, and evoked the odor of the porter's *pot-au-feu*. A French soldier wounded in the Crimea, 1855, with his colonel bending over him, might have been any one of a hundred thousand scenes of to-day. On one were the arms of the King of Spain, and the date 1608, and on another those of

Maria Theresa and her consort, Francis III, Duke of Lorraine. Their origins were as diverse as the history of Lorraine itself, and I glimpsed family groups sitting about hearths, looking at them through the flames.

Later.

Met to-day two Englishwomen coming out of the hospital. One, nearing sixty, had something ardent in her charming blue eyes and under austerely brushed whitening hair; there was a suggestion of banked fires—banked under ashes of circumstance, probably, as well as time. The other, somewhat younger, in the full grip of *l'âge dangereux*, had something inexorable in her regard. When we passed on I asked who they were, and found they were daily doers of acts of mercy and devotion, and then I found myself looking for eternal reasons in transient things, under the impression made by those two women—met only in passing, but whose emanations I suddenly caught. And I thought: Among the innumerable phenomena of the war are these women of various ages (though the phenomenon is most apparent between thirty-five and sixty), brought for the first time into personal contact with man, other than father or brother, ministering to his wants, witness of his agonies, awed spectator of his continual apotheosis, and all the daily transmutations of the definite and ordinary into the infinite and divine. The world war gives the one chance for the twisting of conventional lives, lived along the straightest of lines, into completely unexpected shapes. They come from abodes of hitherto unescapable virginities, these elemental women of indescribable innocence, with that warm, wondering look, or sometimes that determined and inexorable look, upon their faces, these unchosen and unmated, to become part of the strange lining of the war, part of the vast

patchwork. Not the least strange are these pale, thin bits, sewn into something riotous, reckless, multicolored, heroic. It's a far cry from Shepherd's Bush or Clapham Junction or Stepney Green to battle-fields, hospitals, vanishings, potent reminders of forces withdrawn forever from the world-sum, or, still more, of convalescences and evocations of returning forces, but *not* re-established order.

Everywhere the subtle but deathless emanation of the male—his heroisms, his agonies, his needs, his weakness, and his strength.

Can one wonder at the mighty tide obeying nameless natural laws, like other tides, that flood the areas where the manhood of the world is concentrated?

Very hot. Out there in the *Champagne Pouilleuse* men are marching in the white dust, resting in the white dust, giving up their lives in the white dust. Am sitting under the chestnut-tree. A soldier, in civil life a gardener, has been sent to tidy up our garden, and its *belle patine* will soon give way to spick-and-spanness. I sensed such a passion of tenderness in the way he handled his rake that I went over to speak to him, and this is his history. He is from Cette—*une ville si jolie*—and he speaks with the heavy accent of his part of the world. He is a territorial and forms part of the *État-Civil des Champs de Bataille* (civilian workers on the battle-fields). This doesn't sound bad, but it really means that since he was called, eighteen months ago, he, who all his life has planted flowers, has been digging up dead bodies, hunting in a literal "body of death" to find the plaques, and then identifying by means of a map the place where they are found.

"*Madame, je n'en pouvais plus.* It was too terrible. I am forty-seven years old, but I asked to be put among the attacking troops. They refused, but sent me here.

Now in this garden I have found heaven again." And his eyes, his soft, suffering eyes, filled with tears.

I asked him about his family—one son is fighting in the Vosges.

"He is six feet four and he so resembles Albert I that they call him *le roi des Belges*. I lost my daughter a few months ago—a beautiful girl with curling blond hair. After her fiancé fell at Verdun, she went into a decline. My other son is young, seventeen, but his turn is near. I had a beautiful family." The gardener himself is straight-featured and straight-browed, caught up how terribly in the wine-press of the war. "All my life I have been gardener in great houses," he added, with a shudder. "The work they gave me *là-bas* is the most terrible of all. *On n'y résiste pas à la longue. O les pauvres restes qu'on trouve! O, Madame!*"

I asked him to bring me the photographs of his family, and his face brightened for a moment as he stood with his head uncovered. One speaks to any chance person, and immediately one gets a story that is fit only to be handled by some master of that incomparable thing, French prose.

Later.

A while ago investigated the house. Up-stairs is a little room toward the north, papered in a yellow-and-white pin-stripe design of forty or fifty years ago. In it is a yellow baroque niche with a shell design at the top, having a temple or altar-like suggestion, in spite of the too-large, ugly, marble-topped mahogany wash-stand that fills it. Above the mahogany bed is a carved wooden holy water font, a little shelf in the corner for books, and another for a lamp, and there is a window looking out on small gardens cut up into bits for flowers and vegetables. As I entered it I seemed to know that some spirit rare and strong enough to project emana-

tions, sensible even to a stranger long after, had lived, perhaps died, in it. I settled down immediately in a really not comfortable, too-small, brown, upholstered arm-chair, sloping forward, and felt somehow as if I were in choice company, and began to turn the pages of Bordeaux's *Dernier jour du Fort de Vaux*, which I had in my hand as I entered. But something unseen held my attention, not the book. The room was gently, softly haunted, and the world of spirits was sensibly about me. . . . Anyway, the plain of Châlons gives me the creeps.

Joseph, reappearing this afternoon, brought the news that there had been another air raid on Bar-le-Duc at noon, and they had dropped pounds of leaflets telling of the Russian defeat, Rumanians retreating, in danger of being enveloped. The leaflets wound up by saying the Germans were sick of the war—they supposed the French were—and why not have peace?

CHAPTER IV

THE BURIAL OF PÈRE CAFARD

CHÂLONS, *Sunday, 29th.*

TELEGRAM that M. de Sinçay may be passing through. I would like to see his *grand seigneur* contour decorate our 1860 establishment. Go to the *Bureau de la Place*, and nothing less than a general (Abbevillers) grasps the receiver and telephones for me to Bar-le-Duc—but without result. They are all in "our" *secteur* "of a courtesy"!

Twelve-o'clock mass at Notre Dame. Again rolling music, and the green vestment of the priest especially beautiful at the end of that high gray Gothic vista. Many, many military. I thought of an English officer who said to me not long ago:

"See how the soldier is exalted in the New Testament. It is certainly not the man of law, the money-changer, the man of politics, nor governors. When Christ has an especial lesson to show, how often He shows it through the soldier, even unto the servant of the centurion."

On returning, found Mrs. S. and Miss E. arrived from the village of the fifteenth-century towers,[1] and the khaki-clad sons of Mars from over the seas, their hearts filled with patriotism and their tank with American *essence*. Coffee under the chestnut-tree, lovely sun filtering

[1] Gondrecourt, the first American encampment in Lorraine.

through, and the little white butterflies flying about the little white ash-tree; and we told stories, being all of us souls that laugh, which we did, till we couldn't breathe, at the story of the woman's-preparedness meeting in a certain transcendental town where the head of the assembly in solemn accents besought as many as felt drawn to such work to become automobilists —"and the moment the Germans set foot in New York rush the virgins to the West, preferably Kansas City." In the town of brotherly love, where a like assemblage was held, an immediate position was available, March, 1917, with a commission of major-general, to look after dead soldiers' widows for another blinking female. *Oh! là, là!*—and when one thinks we've *got* to win the war!

Later.

Have just laid down *Le Mannequin d'Osier*, completely dazzled by that first chapter, so monstrously clever, so diabolically lucid, so icily logical, so magnetically cynical, and I said to myself, after all, "one can only write of war in between wars." I long for a friend to read with me the pages where M. Roux, on short leave during his years' military service, says to M. Bergeret, "*Il y a quatre mois que je n'ai pas entendu une parole intelligente*," to the paragraph where M. Bergeret says, "*Mais nous sommes un peuple de héros et nous croyons toujours que nous sommes trahis.*" It stimulated a desire for the discussion of things as they are, over against what one idiotically hopes they may be, with a bit of imagination concerning the future thrown in.

July 29th, evening.

In the afternoon we all went to another theatrical representation in the big hall, given by the *1er Régiment de Marche des Zouaves*. Again immense concourse.

Again the "Marseillaise," and again the *Lion d'Orient* made his majestic entry, and dozens of generals and high officials followed him, and again all sat forming their glittering hemicycle in front of the stage. Again a few nurses, some wives of officers, and the thousands of *poilus*.

A great poster read: "*Vous êtes priés d'assister au convoi, service, et enterrement du Père Cafard, assassiné par le Communiqué.*

"*Le deuil sera conduit par le Pinard, le Jus, la Gniole, le Tabac, et tous les membres du Chacal hurlant.*"

It appears that those of the 1st Zouaves still in hospital had had a rise in temperature at the thought that their representation might not equal that of the Moroccan Division of Friday. The *Compère* was made to look as much as possible like Colonel Rolland—adored by his men. "*On R'met Ca!*" has been given in the trenches all over the front, and was just as funny and amusing as the other, but there was a strange intermezzo about three o'clock, when the dreadful sun, shining through the glass panes of the sides (on the roof great squares of canvas had been spread), began to get fainter. It was like being in the hot-room of a Turkish bath. Suddenly a darkness fell, accompanied by a deafening and terrifying noise of a heavy rattling on the roof and a beating in at the sides; the voices and music were completely drowned and the performance had to be suspended. Even the officers were beginning to look about—when the lights suddenly went out and we found ourselves in Stygian blackness at 4.30 of a summer afternoon, the terrific noise continuing, with the undernote of the stirring of the thousands assembled. A nameless fear, or something akin to it, went through the vast assemblage. Finally we realized that it was heaven, not the enemy, bombarding us, as hailstones,

even by the time they had gone through many hot hands, as big as turkey eggs, were passed about. There was the sound of breaking glass, water began to rush in, the heavy canvas, spread on the roof as protection against the sun, and also to prevent the light from being seen from the air, alone prevented the roof from breaking in. Finally the lights reappeared and the performance proceeded to the diminishing sound of heavy rain—but it was a strange experience. Even those generals of Olympic calm had begun to "think thoughts" at one moment. It would have been a big "bag," had anything been doing, and we all knew it.

Mrs. S. and Miss E. have been persuaded to stay at the house by the Marne, rather than at La Haute Mère Dieu, and we have arranged to double up.

I am to motor back to Paris with them to-morrow.

CHAPTER V

A PROVIDENTIAL FORD

PARIS, *July 31st.*

YESTERDAY, at 8.30 in the damp morning, Lieutenant Robin appeared with my military pass to return by auto instead of by train, and I said a special farewell to the gardener, carrying our bags out to the motor in a passionate tenderness of courtesy. Miss Nott and Miss Mitchell bade us Godspeed, and we passed over the Marne and out of town. At the *consigne* examination of our papers, our charming chauffeuse excited much attention. An officer standing there with pasteboard box and leather bag asked if we would give him a lift. The road was unusually empty and he had been awaiting an act of Providence for two hours. We were it.

He would be in ordinary times a Frenchman of the stereotyped banal sort, and he was entirely without charm, though I dare say he is known as a *beau garçon* in Lyons, where before the war he was *marchand de bois*. But the war transmutes everything it touches, and he, too, had undergone the subtle change. He said, quite simply for a man naturally fatuous, "*Je ne retrouverai jamais ma vie d'autre fois.*" I seemed to see what that life had been. Small but good business transactions; some success with women, as I said he would be considered as handsome; the theater; reading news-

papers in a café; talking of the happenings of his quarter of the town—and the lamp of his soul burning only dimly. But even he has been caught up in the "chariot that rides the ridges" and must partake of *la haine et tous ses maux, la gloire et tous ses crimes.* We drop him at a crossroad and he takes a muddy side-path to the village where his regiment is billeted.

At another crossway just out of the village of Vertus another officer was waiting. We called out, "Is this the road to Epernay?" And then, "Do you want a lift?" This time it was a dark-eyed young man with a kindling glance and something responsive and mercurial in his being, giving a sensation of personality, awake, running, a-thrill. He had twenty-four hours' permission to go to Paris to see his mother, and had arrived to see the train pulling out of the little station. He also was waiting Fate at the crossroads, and crossroads in war-time are a favorite abode of Fate. He had been wounded near Suippes, lay twenty-four hours in a shell-hole, and was finally brought in by some man he didn't know, whose head was blown off as he was pulling him into the trench. Something deep rustled in my heart at the vision of the splendor of that anonymity. Six months in hospital, six months of convalescing, and then a hunger for the front—*quorum pars fuit.*

We were passing through a beautiful country of vineyards, Vertus, Mesnil, Avize, in the loveliness of graded greens, malachite, beryl, emerald, jasper, and stretches of aquamarine where the grapes had been powdered with the *mélange de Bordeaux.* Everywhere were little sharp, steep hills, their plantings taking all kinds of lights as they turned to east or west or south.

At Epernay we wound about the streets till we came to the Hôtel de l'Europe, marked with a star in the guide; but you see no stars when you get into its encumbered,

dull little courtyard—as slightly modern as possible—ask for luncheon, any kind of luncheon, and find one can't have it or anything till twelve, the only fixed thing, except the *consigne*, I have discovered in the war zone. We went across the square to the Café de la Place, where we had *œufs sur le plat*, a yard and a half of thin, crusty bread, a thick pat of yellow butter, and a bottle of Chablis, that poured out pinky into our glasses. After which, reinforced and most cheerful, we went to the Place du Marché, where were many signs of the campaign of August and September, 1914. Among débris of bombarded buildings the fruit-market was being held. Plums, peaches, and apricots were of the most delicious, and we got pounds of them, which later were to be smashed and mashed and to ruin our dressing-bags and our clothes and the motor seats as we bumped along. It all came from Paris except the tiny, sweet, white grapes.

Epernay seems banal, driving through it, but if one thinks a bit, all sorts of things flash into the mind. It has a Merovingian past, and has been pillaged innumerable times by innumerable hosts. It belonged to the Counts of Champagne, to Louise of Savoy; Henry IV besieged it in person, and Maréchal de Biron fell by his side. Now thinking of its great champagne industry, into mind come memories of dinner-tables around which sat white-vested, decorated statesmen, even unto the kind that did not prevent war, and lovely women, and the toss of repartee, and flash of jewel and white throat, and all the once-accustomed things no longer ours.

As we got out of Epernay a terrible temptation assailed us. Three law-abiding women, by reason of original sin, I suppose, were drawn to take the forbidden road to Reims—Reims, the scarred, the pitiful—Reims,

whose cannon sounded even now in our ears—rather than the straight path of duty and *sauf-conduits* to Paris.

"After all, we're not here to go joy-riding in the war zone," said one, virtuously; and then prudence, most dismal of virtues, triumphed, bolstered up by a look at a well-guarded bridge, and I told the inspiring story of the principal of the school my mother went to, whose last words to every graduate class were, "What is duty, young ladies?" And the young ladies were expected to respond, "A well-spring in the soul." It isn't (and never has been), and our eyes kept sweeping the hill between the Epernay road and that great plain of Champagne in the midst of which is set the broken jewel of France. A military auto passed as we stood there, and an officer waved us onward. We let that hand pointing us to Paris decide. It was the triumph of prudence—plus a lively sense of favors to come. Some one muttered, "Had we been going to take the boat on Saturday, oh, then mayhap, mayhap . . ."

Dormans. Several kilometers before we got into Dormans little crosses began to show themselves along the roadside. All through here was heavy fighting during the battle of the Marne. The first grave we stopped by bore on its little cross the words, "*Trois Allemands,*" and it was neatly fenced up with black sticks and wire. We started to climb the hill, and among the malachite, the beryl, the emerald, the jasper, and the aquamarine vines were many other graves. Sometimes it would be "*20 Français,*" the red-and-white-and-blue *cocarde* decorating the cross. Once it was "*30 Allemands.*" On another was the name "*Lastaud, le 3 septembre, 1914, souvenir d'un ami.*" I thought how friendship has been glorified in this war.

But mostly it was the continuous gorgeous anonymity

of the defenders of the land that clutched the heart and with them the invaders, pressing their bayonets and their wills into a land not theirs. I was once more again before the awful tangle of the world as I looked at these resting-places. Over beyond the crest of the hill and the forest was Montmirail. Just a hundred years before, Napoleon had put these names upon the scrolls of history, and again and then again they had resounded to marching feet, the terrors of invasion, the heroisms of defense. One of a group of soldiers passing called out as we stood by one of the German graves:

"I came through here in 1914."

"But you still walk the earth," I answered.

"I got a ball in the hip, all the same, on the top of that hill," and he pointed across the road. "*Mais j'ai eu de la chance.*" And a look of a strange and pitiful wonder that he was above the earth, not under it, flashed for a moment over his young face; then he touched his cap and went singing down the road with his companions, and I caught the refrain, "*Ces mots sacrés, ces mots sacrés, gloire et patrie, gloire et patrie.*"

And somehow, after Dormans, we were all quiet. I only remember long, gray villages, mostly eighteenth century, and many blue soldiers walking about their broad, central streets, and signs of billetings, "*30 hommes, 2 officiers,*" "*5 hommes, 2 chevaux,*" black-robed women coming out of little Gothic churches, and children playing, and in between the villages great avenues of poplar and plane trees. Then we lost the Marne and picked up the Seine, and passed La Ferté, and Meaux, seen from the inside, preserved its flavor of "*autres temps, autres mœurs,*" in spite of the 1917 soldiers billeted there, walking hand in hand with girls who don't have a ghost of a chance, in military towns, to get through the war as they began it.

Entered Paris in a fine drizzle of rain at 6.30. Our charming chauffeuse dead tired after the long day, but steering us so prudently and yet so quickly through the wet, crowded streets. Give me a good woman chauffeur *any day!*—not simply when coming from the front! She takes no chances, but she makes good time and she gets you there. But somehow one leaves one's heart at the front, and I thought to myself as I got to the hotel door, "It's not so good, after all, to feel *just safe* and to be comfortable."

PART III

LORRAINE IN AUTUMN

"L'élégante et mélancolique Lorraine"

CHAPTER I

NANCY AND MOLITOR

1.30 p.m., Tuesday, October 9th.

PASSING Meaux. Square gray tower of its cathedral against a gray sky, the gray hemicycle of its lovely apse cutting in against reddish-gray roofs; gray houses with old towers built into them; yellowing acacia and plane and willow trees; level corn-fields stripped of their harvest, pheasants and magpies pecking in them; golden pumpkins; and *betteraves* showing red and vermilion roots bursting out of the ground; everything wet—wet.

LIGNY-EN-BARROIS.

Two American soldiers walking up a muddy village street in the dusk; rain falling; a cinnamon-colored stream slipping by; and a quantity of shabby, wet foliage and wetter meadows.

GONDRECOURT, *5.40.*

In the extreme point of the angle where the Nancy train seems to turn back to Paris and where many American soldiers are billeted. Cheerless, dimly lighted station. Groups of our men standing about, high piles of United States boxes, marked "Wizard Oats." Some persuasion of black-frock-coated "sky pilot" walking up and down and humming, "Pull for the shore, sailor, pull for the shore" (there *was* a lot of water about!), and then in the darkness the train slipped out. There

and in all the dim, wet Lorraine villages about are damp, puzzled, homesick, forlorn, brave, determined, eager young Americans.

HÔTEL EXCELSIOR ET D'ANGLETERRE,
NANCY, *Tuesday evening.*

Cabs at station, hot water, writing-paper, meat, warmth, all sorts of things you don't always get on Tuesday in Paris. Everything, in fact, except light. Dining-room full of officers. *Chic atmosphère de guerre* began to envelope me, not yet experienced that day. Started from Paris tired and not particularly receptive, but was conscious of a slow quickening of sensibility as the hours passed, drawing me within the zone of armies.

This "chic war atmosphere" is like nothing else. Impersonal and larger lungs are needed to breathe it. We no longer, so many of us, read of their battles, but they still fight them, these blue-clad men out here. In the coal-black evening, stumbling from the station, one realizes it all once more—and there is some lighting of the soul.

October 10th.

Nancy in rain and storm, and all night the sound of cannon and gun and mitrailleuse turned against sweet flesh and blood, the sons of women dying in agony hard as their mother's pain, and no way out. Never were the imaginations of men less elastic; little groups everywhere are hourly setting this cold grind in motion with a word or a gesture, around green tables or bending over maps—in a few small spaces deciding the agonies of millions.

An *avion* almost tapped at my window once toward morning and reminded me of a young aviator with whom we talked in the train last night, his face a-twitch, strange eyes, gloomy, set mouth, once *jeunesse dorée.* A hard look as he answered:

"*Avion de chasse, il n'y a que cela.*" He had been "resting" in the cavalry, where there was little movement, and he couldn't stand it. As for the trenches—

"*O les tranchées! Etre avec des gens que je ne connais pas, sous des conditions indescriptibles; non, je n'en peux plus.*"

"Better to fall from the heavens?" I asked him.

And then I realized the disarray of nerves, the complete unfitting of the being to an earthly habitat, in the knowledge that life is measured by an almost countable number of hours or days, scarcely weeks, and rarely, rarely months, and the calling on help from the flower of sleep to fit one for acts impossible to normal being.

I must say this very evidently "made-in-Germany" hotel is most comfortable. *Jugend-Stil* designed bed, exquisitely clean; great white eiderdown; a munificence of brass electric-light fixtures representing leaves, with frosted shades running from pale pink to pale green, and giving plenty of light; the iron shutters tightly pulled down, of course. Large wash-stand with a huge faucet for hot water, bearing the name "Jacob"; the heating apparatus by Rückstuhl; the telephone, "Berliner-system"; electric light and lift the familiar "Schindler." Wardrobe and mirror over wash-stand have, like the bed, a design, not of conventionalized flowers, but of flowers devoid of life. The inexpressibly sloppy *mollesse* of *art nouveau* is in such contrast to the beautiful precision of touch of the eighteenth century.

At 9.30 E. M. came into my room and said, "We'd better doll up and be off." I leave it to the gentlest of readers to surmise what we did before being off, and I would like to say here that one doesn't always "doll up" for others; the process gives to one's own being a sense of completeness most sustaining. It comes after that of having one's clothes put on properly.

En route to the Prefect's we met the tall, good-looking blond young son of Jean de Reszke, "*très chic, cherchant le danger*"; "*en voilà un qui n'a pas froid aux yeux*," the only and adored child of his parents. It's not a very promising situation for them. But again I thought, "Nothing but good can befall the soldier, so he play his part well," and started to ponder on the incalculable growth of filial piety, and of the love of mothers, and their griefs, when, suddenly walking along the gray streets of Nancy, the scene shifted, and it was the Metropolitan Opera House that I saw—the lights, the red glow, the boxes, the jewels; the warmth, the stir of the orchestra, the quiet of the listening house, were about me. It seemed to be the second act of "Tristan and Isolde" after the duo, when King Mark makes his noble entry and in those unforgetable accents begins his broken-hearted apostrophe to Tristan, "*Tatest du's in Wirklichkeit, wähnst du das?*" And all that unsurpassed and unsurpassable art of the great Polish brothers was again evoked; one now gathered to his rest in stress of war, the other knowing a greater fear than for himself.

Then I found myself in the Place Stanislas under gray morning skies, instead of the gleaming twilight web. I felt suddenly and acutely the turning of the seasons and the inexorable advent of winter through which unsheltered flesh and blood must pass. That ravishing of the spirit I knew in the warm June sunset was mine no more.

Later.
Waiting for the motor to drive to Lunéville.

Went with Madame Mirman, the wife of the *Préfet de la Meurthe et Moselle*, to visit Molitor. It is a huge collection of barrack-buildings which for three years has contained that terrible precipitation of old men,

SISTER JULIE

BAS-RELIEF OF THE REFUGEES

As they passed at Evian—but typical of any group anywhere.

women, and children from the devastated districts around about. They are received in every conceivable condition of hunger, dirt, disease, and distress of soul. They had been living in the woods and fields that first summer, and the children running the streets of half-ruined towns, before being brought to Molitor.

We went first to the school-building, and into the kindergarten room where rows of children were making straight lines with beans on little tables. Very hot and stuffy in the hermetically sealed room, every child sniffling and sneezing and coughing. There are always faces that stand out, and in this room, as the children rose and sang a song with patting of the hands, there was one child of five with gestures so lovely and movements of the body so rhythmic that one realized afresh the eternal differences in the seasoning of the human *pâte*. She was between two clumsy, wooden-faced children, one with a peaked forehead, the other with a heavy jaw.

We then went up-stairs to a class-room of older boys, and after we had spoken to the schoolmaster I noticed a handsome boy with shining eyes and a firm mouth. The master, who was new and wished to become acquainted with his pupils, had written the following questions on the blackboard: "Whence do you come? What was the occupation of your parents? Are you happy at Molitor?" etc. Well, that little boy of eleven, when asked what he had written, turned out to be a sort of cross between Demosthenes and Gambetta, and read from his slate an impassioned apostrophe about "*le flot envahisseur des barbares, quand délivrera-t-on la France martyrisée de la main destructrice de l'ennemi?*" and to the question, "Are you happy at Molitor?" the answer was, "*Oui, on est bien à Molitor, mais rien ne remplace le foyer; quand on a perdu cela, on a tout perdu.*"

The face of the master showed some embarrassment at any restrictions on happiness at Molitor, but the boy, whose eyes had begun to flame, continued: "*O quand viendra le jour de la Revanche, le jour sacré de la délivrance?*" and wound up with something about his blood and the blood of his children. His father, who was dead, had been employed in the customs at Avricourt, and his mother now cooked in one of the Molitor buildings. Then we passed through a room where some fifty women were sorting and stemming hops; the strong, warm odor enveloped us and the eyes of the women followed us.

Then out across the immense courtyard to one of the dormitory buildings. Rows of beds, and above them, around the walls, a line of shelves on which is every kind of small article that could be carried in flight, from trimmings for Christmas trees to shrines and little strong-boxes.

As we entered the first room, Madame Mirman said to an old woman with deep, soft eyes:

"*Comment ça va-t-il aujourd'hui?*"

And with such grace she answered:

"*Oh, Madame, c'est la vieillesse, et on n'en guérit pas.*"

Another woman, nursing a rheumatic knee, when asked about her son, who had been at Molitor on a three days' permission, put her cracked old hand over her heart and said, "*Voir un peu sa personne fait oublier tout.*"

In all the big rooms near the long windows women sit bent over embroidery and passementerie frames. One of them, with thin hair and horny hands, was working with extreme rapidity on a bright *pailleté* strip for an evening gown, a design of silver lilies on white tulle, in such contrast to her worn face and bent figure.

Many were working at lovely and intricate tea-

cloths, with designs of the Lorraine cross, and thistle, oak and acorn designs, that had been handed down through generations. Some of the work Madame Mirman is able to dispose of directly, while some is contracted for with big shops.

When we came down-stairs there was a great sound of young feet and voices and various noises of well-cared-for children, just dismissed from the seats of learning, coming up the stone stairway to their dinner.

It's the threading up of all these destinies, this web of the France to be, that is the great problem. And oh, how terrible is this uptearing of human beings, this ghastly showing of the roots! I have seen it wholesale, east and west. I remember especially the first two evacuations of Czernowitz and the adjacent towns and villages during the Russian advance through Galicia. They would flood the streets of Vienna by the tens of thousands, in pitiful groups, always the same—old men, women, and children; and it's all alike, it's war, the ruthless, the indescribable, and everywhere the children paying most heavily. Could the war-book of *children* be written no eyes could read it for tears. . . .[1]

We went back to luncheon at the Prefecture, where I met M. Mirman, one of the most striking figures of the war. Since the 12th of August, 1914, when he took up his duties as *Préfet de la Meurthe et Moselle*, his handsome, straight-featured face has figured at every gathering of sorrow or relief. As he sat at his table, surrounded by his six children, he talked of those first days when Nancy was in danger and it was not known if *le Grand*

[1] During the closing days of February, 1918, the air raids on Nancy were so continuous and so disastrous that Molitor had to be evacuated and the inmates, the aged and the children, were redistributed in other parts of France. These words are quite simple to write and to read. Their significance is beyond expression.

March, 1918, E. O'S.

Couronné on which Castelnau had flung his *paraphe could* protect them, and then he told of many urgent present needs.

After lunch we drove with Madame Mirman to her favorite good work, *l'école ménagère.*

When we got there the elementary class, girls of thirteen to fourteen, were chopping herbs and onions to make seasoning for soups in winter, and putting it up in stone pots. Another class was kneading and rolling out dough. Then we went into the great sewing-room and turned over the books of miniature sample pieces of underclothing. When the girls become expert they are given material and make their own trousseaux.

With a sigh Madame Mirman said: "But I am sad for these girls. The men who might have been their husbands lie dead on the field of honor, and there will be no homes for them."

Something chill and inexorable laid its hand on me as I thought: only graves, and they leveled out of memory by time; except in the hearts of mothers, to whom *voir un peu sa personne* is the supreme joy, and the knowledge that it can be no more the supreme sorrow.

HÔTEL DES VOSGES, LUNÉVILLE, *11.30 p.m.*

A long day. Many pages of the book of life and death turned. Just before leaving Nancy, made a little tour of the battered station. Scarcely a pane of glass left anywhere, but in and out of it is the ceaseless movement of blue-clad men. A few flecks of a strange, dull amber in a pale-pink sky, the true sunset sky of Nancy. A bishop with a military cap and a chaplain in khaki pass, lines of *camions* and Red Cross ambulances. Suddenly, beyond the station, a dark-winged thing against the sky is seen to drop, right itself for a moment, then a column of smoke goes up from it, then a flame, then

there is a falling of something black just behind the twin Gothic towers of St.-Léon. The streets filled instantly, "*C'est un des nôtres*," said a man with field-glasses, and then, death in the sky not being unusual here, they went about their business, and the long, delicate towers of St.-Léon got black as ink against the flaming sky. But a man's soul was being breathed out in some distant beet-root field or in the forest of Haye. Peace to him!

The next thing I saw, that has become a familiar sight in the last months, was an American soldier on some sort of permission, and hanging from his arm, neatly bound, was a pretty little "dictionary"—from whom, however, came sounds of broken English. The British Expeditionary Force saved the classics from destruction at one time; now "salvage" seems to be rather the turn of the American forces. One can only philosophize on the indestructibility of matter.

The Place Stanislas was a bit out of our way, but when I saw the lovely Louis XV knots of pink that the orb of day was tying in the sky before he quite departed I begged for three minutes in its pale loveliness. Against the delicate ribbons of the sky were urns and figures, urns with stone flames arising from them, softly glowing, or stone flower-twisted torches held by winged beings, children and youths or angels I knew not—but I did know in a flash just how and why the Place Stanislas came into being.

In the gray streets were blue-clad, heavily laden men, and the chill autumn twilight was falling about them. Oh, Nancy! dream of the past and yet with so much of the hope of the present within your gates!

As we sped out of town, through the vast manufacturing suburbs, I turned and saw a bank of orange glory in the west, cut into browns and reds, with little thread-

ings of gray and green and blue, for all the world like an ancient Cashmere shawl with light thrown on it.

Night was falling as we passed through St.-Nicolas du Port. The two immense towers of the church, which dominate the landscape, were cutting black and cypress-like into the sky. The streets were full of dim figures—soldiers, overalled men, and many trousered women coming from munition-factories, with baskets and clinging children, hurrying home to get the evening meal.

We two American women found ourselves threading our way through it all in a Ford which E. M. was driving herself, the Ford which in the afternoon had allowed itself caprices only permissible to lovelier objects, and there, close behind the French lines, we talked of love and marriage, and the Church. And these things had been and are for one, and for the other all to come.

Among its various imperfections, the Ford was one-eyed, and our little light did not cast its beams very far. We got tangled up into a long line of *camions*, with blinding headlights, quite extinguishing us as we hugged the right side of the road. Finally we reached the outpost of Lunéville, where the guard stopped us, dark and disreputable-looking as we were, flashed his lantern, saw the lettering on the auto. We cried, "Vitrimont," and then passed on. The chill night had completely fallen, but in the dark fields rose darker crosses that only one's soul could see. Peace to them that lie beneath!

Into town safe; drew up at the door of the house that was once an old Capuchin monastery, groped our way through a dark garden to find a warm welcome from Mademoiselle Guérin, a shining tea-table, an open fire, many books· things seemed *too* well with us.

CHAPTER II

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY EMANATIONS

October 11th, 7.30.

AWAKENED at five o'clock to the sound of cavalry passing under my windows. I have three, and got the full benefit of the hoofs. I looked out into a bluish, late-night sky; endless shadowy lines of men that I knew were blue-clad were defiling, and there was a faint booming of cannon. Everything that the pitchy blackness of the streets of Lunéville prevents the inhabitants from doing between 5 and 8 P.M. they do between 5 and 8 A.M. The hour was set back on the 7th, which is why we have suddenly so much morning and these chopped-off afternoons. It makes the streets of the old town "hum" in the early hours. No Taubes; the sky too threatening. Again *chic atmosphère de guerre.*

My big room is charming. The doors have panelings of the great epoch of Lunéville, but on the walls is a fresh papering of a pinkish *toile de Jouy* design, in such good taste, an abyss between it and the *Jugend-Stil* of the "Hôtel Excelsior et d'Angleterre"; over each door is a lunette containing a faded old painting.

The pink-curtained windows have deep embrasures; a fresh, thick, pale-gray carpet quite covers the floor; on the mantelpiece is a bronze clock, a large Europa sitting on a small bull. I suspect *it* is 1830. In one corner a commodious Louis XV *armoire.* On one of

its doors is carved a peasant's house and a hunter aiming at a deer half-hidden in some trees. On the other is a fishing scene and a bridge, and in the distance a château. The panels are inclosed in charming Pompadour scrolls, and there is an elaborate wrought-iron lock of the same period. It seemed to epitomize the life of Lorraine, as well as "the reign of the arts and talents." Discovered last night that the electric light is in the right place, so that a lady can dress for dinner or read in bed with equal facility. There is all the hot water one could wish, an open fireplace, but it was with a sigh that I said, as I heard the cannon, "*Rien ne manque.*" The maid, who had been in England, put our things out last night with a dainty touch, the ribbons on top; my pink satin négligé was placed with art across the chair by my bed. In E. M.'s room, equally comfortable, her pale-blue one was also tastefully displayed. Somehow, all the physical comfort is so insistently in contrast with what is being gone through with a few kilometers away, and though my soul can be supremely content without any of it, I looked for the moment with a new appreciation on this flicker of comfort behind that dreadful front.

Again we groped through the Place Léopold after dinner at Mlle. Guérin's, feeling our way slowly under completely remote stars, Jupiter so gorgeous that for a moment my heart was afraid. Then I became sensible of ghostly and lovely companions, the amiable secrets of whose amiable lives have been revealed to me in many a tome since I crossed that square in those linden-scented nights of June. Did linden scent, on which a long chapter could be written, have anything to do with their morals, I wonder? However that may be, I thought of Duke Léopold going from the château through the park to the house in the rue de Lorraine to see the

Princesse de Craon, who bore twenty children here in Lunéville, preserving her beauty and her husband's love, and that of Duke Léopold as well, evidently having the secret of squaring the circle without breaking it (unknown in the twentieth century, when everything "goes bang" if it is but breathed upon). Then of the wild and witty Chevalier de Boufflers, painting and making verses, loving and forgetting, whose mother, beloved of "*Stanislas, Roi de Pologne et Duc de Lorraine et de Bar*," was the bright particular star of Stanislas's Court, as his grandmother had been of Léopold's. And how often *La divine Emilie* and Voltaire passed through the Place Léopold in their coach to be put up at the Palace and contribute to the gaiety of nations. They and many others filled the square, and I was thinking of discreet sedan-chairs coming from rendezvous rather than of the uncompromised and uncompromising lamp-post that finally got me, minus the light.

Now I quite dislike getting up from this literally downy couch, with its dainty pink-lined, lace-trimmed, white-muslin covered eiderdown and its heaps of soft pillows, to investigate further their *amours*, and in general the *arts et talents* of the eighteenth century, but so I willed it, and so it must be done. For some reason nervous energy is at a low ebb. There are moments when I throw my life out of the window, when nothing seems impossible and most things quite easy, but to-day the gray world outside, *l'élégante et mélancolique Lorraine*, I would consider well lost for converse with a beloved friend by my fireside.

October 12th.

Nothing to be found in Lunéville on an October night except your soul, and if you don't keep it fairly bright, you won't find even that. Oh, woe is me! about six o'clock mine was suddenly too dark and sad for words,

so I betook me to the downy couch of the morning, with a batch of letters and various books given me by M. Guérin at lunch, some old, some new, concerning *l'élégante et mélancolique Lorraine*. The Hôtel des Vosges is ahead of any Ritz that was ever built, and, what's more, in it your soul's your own, even if it is a poor and dark and trembling thing.

My "*Symphonie Pastorale*" letter to —— returned to me. Have just reread it and pinned it into the Journal. It's all part of the same.

AIX-LES-BAINS, *vendredi, 27 août, 1917.*

. . . The orchestra, pale, emasculated, having the minimum of strings—the musicians of France are dead or in the trenches—seemed without accent during the first part of the program. "*La Chasse du Jeune Henri*" of Méhul, "*Les Eolides*" of César Franck, something of Grétry, Dukas, Saint-Saëns, *enfin*, one of the usual war-time programs. But then followed the "*Symphonie Pastorale*" and the master's voice suddenly swelled the thin sounds, triumphant in the beauty of his order and splendor.

A.—(*Sensations agréables en arrivant à la Campagne. Allégro ma non troppo.*) I felt myself invaded by a familiar but long-untasted delight as my ear received the gorgeous consonances, and the lovely theme of the violins drew me to an interior place. My fancy was set a-wandering in a world of green glades, and broad meadows covered with asphodel and belladonna and fringed by dark plantings of pines, such as the master had wandered in, and "upon my eyes there lay a tear the dream had loosened from my brain." In deep serenity I found myself thinking on appearances of "things wise and fair," feeling myself in some way included in a company of paradisaical beings.

Suddenly an almost unbearable spiritual exasperation succeeded the delight, and I saw a scarred and dreadful scene, like to the lunar landscape of the battle-field of Verdun, and I knew that my dwelling-place was a world of blood-madness. I tried to beat off the invading horror. Hot tears of protest came to my eyes, a feeling of suffocation clutched my throat, and a something burning wrapped my soul. Delight was dead.

B.—(*Au bord du Ruisseau. Andante molto moto.*) The master spoke again, in a voice of purling water over smooth stones and through soft grasses; the music of the lower strings, monotonous, hypnotic, possessed my fancy. Again the joy with which he was looking on the beauty of the exterior world tried to communicate itself to me. But my eyes fell on a white-haired man seated near me, a black band about his arm, dozing or dreaming, I knew not which. He awakened with a start and groan, and was doubtless thinking on combat and empty places and "heroes struggling with heroes and above them the wrathful gods."

And I thought of Veiled Destinies and high and nameless sacrifices and children at evening and silent firesides, and broken loves and other visible and invisible things.

C.—(*Joyeuse réunion de Paysans. Allégro.*) Expressing the master's deep belief in the goodness of humanity, its deathless adorations, its inextinguishable hopes.

But the houses of the peasants are empty, even here in Savoy, and husbands and fathers and sons will cross their thresholds no more. "The ancients have ceased from the gates, the young men from the choir of the singers."

I sat by the stream among the peasants and remembered suddenly two combatants, an Austrian and a Serb, visited in a hospital in Vienna that first winter of

the war. One had lain by a frozen brook across a fallen log for two days, his hands and feet alone touching the ground, and when he was brought in they were black and swollen, and as I saw him he was but a trunk of a man with dull eyes. And the other, the Serb, with something wild and burning in his look, and restless hands, had fallen with his feet in a stream, and he, too, would walk no more; and so one thinks of brooks and sweet, moving waters these days.

(*Orage—Tempête. Allégro.*) The sudden D flat, the world in noise and horror and protesting hate, and hard, bright-eyed men meeting from East and West, the sons of the world falling for the sins of the world; and there is no way out, for all words save that of peace may be spoken. And I thought on the loneliness of the mind, and knew it for as great or greater than that of the heart, for mostly humanity lives by its personal throbs, its desires and its hopes and fears, and these are of such abundance that there are always contacts. But the loneliness of the mind is a world where there is scarcely any sound of footsteps, few voices call, and sometimes it is deathly cold, and that is why I write to *you* to-night.

I listened again. (*Joie et sentiments de reconnaissance après l'orage. Allegretto.*) And I suddenly realized how unsubstantial, for all their thickness, are the towers wherein each dwells isolated from some near happiness, shut off from some close beatitude, that for a dissolving touch might be his own. And I found that the completed harmonies of the lovely finale, "*Herr, wir danken Dir,*" were seeking my mortal ear, and my soul was being regained to tranquillity. My mind was turned from untimely vanishings, or the despair of men of middle life who go up to battle, and from all the company of those who "have wrapped about themselves the blue-black

cloud of death," and I saw again visions, felicities, progressions, accomplishments. Then, not bearing less beneficent harmonies, I went out, and Hope, with lovely, veiled, outcast, undesired Peace, accompanied me through the warm Savoyan night. But they left me at the door of my dwelling, as the one-armed *concierge* saluted me, and the one-legged lift-man (symbols of my real world) took me up-stairs. Now I am alone with thoughts of him who gave to melody its eternal fashion and to music itself its furthest soul, and would that you had listened with me! . . . You who will not, Peace! . . .

M. Guérin's book-loving, artistic, perceptive son, *en permission*, with a dreadful cold, was at lunch, Colonel ——, and several other men. Mr. G., whose family have been part owners of the Lunéville porcelain-factories for one hundred and fifty years, is charming, erudite, and afterward, over our coffee by his library fire, we talked politics and literature and music. I had just been reading Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*, not at all in favor just now, which I had picked up on her centenary.

"*Une exaltée*," said one of the officers.

"That is not enough to say of one who always had the courage of her convictions," I answered, and recalled the conversation between her and Benjamin Constant when under the Consulate he threw himself into the opposition.

"*Voilà*," he said, "*votre salon rempli de personnes qui vous plaisent; si je parle demain, il sera désert; pensez-y.*" [1]

And she answered, "*Il faut suivre sa conviction.*"

"She certainly followed out her convictions; but what

[1] She received ten refusals for the dinner she was giving the next night; among them one from Talleyrand, which caused a permanent rupture in their relations.

did Madame de Staël know of the Germans?" pursued the colonel. "She saw them in the quite factitious setting of the Weimar Court, and was intoxicated by the play of mind. Those *beaux esprits* presented the character and the future of their race, through rose-colored clouds of Romanticism, to one of the most charming and gifted women another race had ever produced, *et puis elle rentre et elle écrit de l'Allemagne! Cela serait comique si ce n'était pas si triste.*"

"Don't you think both sides played up," I asked, "at those Weimar suppers? She was under the charm of philosophers and musicians, and they under the charm of her wit and appreciation. I keep thinking how they all enjoyed it—and how those black eyes flashed under the heavy red-and-gold turban."

"Without doubt it was more than agreeable. I only complain that she was in a position to mislead succeeding generations, and did so. She seems to have had no *flair*, and because she got the personal enthusiasm, the hot striking of mind against mind, that was at once her gift and her delight, she glorifies a nation that later makes furious attempts to destroy hers."

I then remarked, but a bit warily: "Talking of centenaries, I have just had in my hands the discourse of Wagner on the centenary of Beethoven. It has fire."

"We won't talk of Wagner, the mere memory of a phrase scorches one's ear. Beethoven, yes, for all time, but we French can't listen to Wagner now. He's like a hot iron on seared flesh—or a rake in a wound. We want nothing more to do with the Lohengrins and the Tannhäusers and the Siegfrieds. I only wish they had been annihilated with their Walhalla."

"These beings, however, were potential in the German race. Madame de Staël got their projections, together with the metaphysics of Goethe and his con-

temporaries, and carried away with her the memory of a blue-eyed people lost in metaphysical dreams, passionately loving poetry and music."

"Yes, and presented them to us as an example of all the social virtues. Look at history," said another officer, with a gesture toward the east.

One *can* talk of other things besides the booming of cannon, even in Lunéville — but not with complete pleasure.

Then E. M. and I departed to take a *tournée* about the country. But the Ford reposing in the Guérins' garage was completely unresponsive; it might have been dead. It appears it hates cold weather. A dozen officers are billeted in the Guérins' house; two of their orderlies and the butler tried to crank it. The only signs of life were in the handle, which from time to time flew round with extraordinary rapidity. We called out to one not-over-cautious soldier, "Be careful; you will break your arm."

He only answered:

"If that happens I shall have two or three months of tranquillity." And that's how *he* felt anent the breaking of his arm!

At last we found ourselves on the road bounded by the meadows of the silent crosses, skirting the hill of Léomont, with its great scars of 1914 shell-holes, beneath which is a little village with the strange name of Anthelupt. The Romans were all about here and it was once "Antelucus" (before the sacred grove), and afterward was a dependence of the priory of Léomont built on the site of the ancient temple to the moon. Then we found ourselves on the broad ridge of road leading to Crévic. Great stretches of Lorraine, *l'élégante et mélancolique Lorraine*, were flung out before us under rain-clouds and sunbursts—lovely stretches, with fields

of mustard greedy for the light, blowing patches of red-stemmed osier, and everywhere fields of beet-root in which women and old men and little children were working, piling high red-white mounds or separating the wilted leaves into greenish-yellow piles.

Crévic is shot to bits. Of the château of General Lyautey [1] but a few crumbling walls remain. Though the piles of stones and mortar are covered with the green of three summers' growth, still the cannon are booming to the east and north. The perfectly banal church is intact. People were walking about the streets and improvised roofs cover some sort of homes, and there seemed many very little children. We passed out over an old bridge in a dazzling sunburst, while a great curtain of rain hung to the west near Dombasle, the smoke-columns of whose hundred chimneys caught and held and reflected the gorgeous afternoon light, and there were other great stretches of unspeakable beauty, soft, rolling, and radiant—crying out about the generations that have bent over them.

The great village of Haraucourt has a lovely destroyed church of pure Gothic that workmen are at last roofing over; but three winters have already passed over its beauty, unsheltered and unguarded. We go out through the village in the direction of Dombasle, and suddenly against some gorgeous masses of clouds we see an *avion de chasse*, "type Nieuport," as E. M., who has ample reason to be expert in things aerial, tells me. There is a moment when it is a great silver brooch pinning two gray velvety curtains together, where a ray of blinding light falls. Then it makes a series of marvelous *vrilles*, and I say to her, "How can men who do that love finite woman?" A great observation balloon, *saucisse*, hung in the sky, and another broad

[1] Governor-General of Morocco.

shaft of light lay on the far hills behind which lie intrenched gray-clad men with pointed helmets.

At this moment a *panne*. The only thing in sight is a long line of war-supply wagons drawn by tired horses, and women and old men and children bending over their eternal piles of beet-root. But E. M. said, "Sooner than change that tire, I'll bury the Ford by the road." So we bumped and crawled along till we met a line of *camions*. The first was driven by a handsome, tall, very small-handed, extremely polite Frenchman, who knew Fords, having been four months with Piatt Andrew at the Field Service Ambulance in the rue Raynouard, and who agreed to change it for us.

A hail-storm, like a pelting of diamonds, as sudden bursts of light caught it, came up in the middle of the operation, which was finally completed with expressions of mutual satisfaction. The shining storm was withdrawn like a curtain, showing the sun on the great stretches, and Dombasle with the smoke of its hundred chimneys was a thing of inexpressible beauty, while behind it were the great towers of St.-Nicolas du Port, for which we decided to make a dash. We got into it, through Dombasle, as a perfect rainbow rose from the Meurthe and disappeared into the horizon, where the gray-clad men with the pointed helmets are intrenched.

"For luck," said E. M.

But I asked, "Whose luck?" the rainbow evidently being neutral.

We had some difficulty in finding anything but the towers of the church. There is no square in front; tiny streets encircle it on all sides. But we at last got into the narrow street in front of the cathedral, which is called "*Des Trois Pucelles*," in memory of the three young girls to whom St.-Nicolas gave a *dot*. I was not

alone in remembering that he is the patron saint of those contemplating matrimony.

The church is of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and among the largest of the Gothic churches of Lorraine. Swelling-breasted pigeons with gorgeous pink and red and green and purple upon their throats were nestled against the beautiful carvings of the gray portals, and much soft cooing was going on. Above the central door, in the *trumeau*, is a statue of the saint said to have been done by the brother of Ligier Richier, and I thought of the lovely Gothic fireplace by Ligier Richier himself taken from St.-Mihiel, and now at Ochre Court in Newport.

Noble interior, though the pillars have had the beautiful sharpness of their chiseling blunted by much painting and whitewashing. There are remains of early frescoes on some of the croisillons, and near a door I found a tiny, ancient painting representing scenes in the life of St.-Nicolas, inclosed in glass in a modern varnished wooden frame. Somewhere in the pavement of the church is a certain potent slab, and she who steps upon it is married within the year. Its exact position is not known, but I told E. M. to take an exhaustive walk about and commend herself to heaven and the saint.

When we came out into the ancient streets the western sky was aflame and there were translucent pale greens ahead of us, We turned again toward the open road and Dombasle, named after a monk of the fifth century. Hermits brought the first civilization to these forests, followed by the great bishops and the builder-monks, who constructed the immense abbeys and the churches of Lorraine. Dombasle from some mysterious wilderness had become what I saw it that afternoon. From the chimneys of its munition-factories, against the am-

ber sky, there poured and twisted a wonder of gray and white and deep brown and violet smoke. The darkening, soot-blackened streets were overflowing with human energies spilling themselves into the greedy war-machine. There are vast monotonous workingmen's quarters, and everywhere children, little children, being trampled in the wine-press. . . .

It was dark when we drew up in front of the house of the *maire*, Mr. Keller, the celebrated house where the Prince de Beauvau was born, where the beautiful Princesse de Craon had most of the twenty children, where the Treaty of Lunéville was signed in 1801, and where, in 1914, the *maire* lodged the generals of the German army. Madame was still at her hospital, so we left our cards and came back to the hotel.

Now I must leave the almost Capuan delights of this pleasant room to motor a hundred kilometers. Nancy, Toul, the antique Tullum, and back, is the program. It's raining, it's hailing, it's blowing, but I bethink me of St.-Mansuy and St.-Epvre, the great Bishop of Toul, and those other saints, St.-Eucarius and St.-Loup, starting out in all kinds of weather, and of the *œuvre* that we are to visit, founded last summer for children gathered in 1917 from villages where there had been bad gas attacks. The history of Lorraine piles high about me—the cannon boom. What a day to lie with your life's blood flowing from you in wet beet-root fields. . . . The motor horn sounds.

CHAPTER III

TOUL

October 13th.

WE lunched at the Café Stanislas yesterday after the wildest of drives into Nancy, the Ford seeming like an autumn leaf in the high wind. We did ourselves well, even I, who care not a farthing what I eat except to "stoke the engine." The proprietor, who left Alsace as a boy after 1870, stood and talked to us, as we ate our *œufs au beurre noir*, as French people alone can talk. He said "they" came only with fire and sword; the great Napoleon, who came with the same, had also his "Code" in his pocket. Then he spoke of the marvelous administration of Germany, the order and the use made of each one's capacities, which was why they could *tenir*.

"We only ask for a leader here in France, to be *bien menés*. All other things we have in abundance. But if a department is to be organized or reconstructed, it seems always to be given into the hands of some one knowing nothing about it."

In between I kept looking out where against gray skies beings half child, half angel hold up stone flames, and *panaches* leaning one against the other. The gilding of the *grilles* has a dull gleam through the wet. The statue of Stanislas *le Bienfaisant* was black and big. Everybody was talking about the unexpected visit of

the German *avion* in the bad weather the night before.

The station was further devastated, a train moving out was wrecked and many *permissionnaires* killed, a house near the Hôtel Excelsior et d'Angleterre was totally demolished, the *avion* flying very low, not more than twenty-five meters above the town at one time. After lunch we went over to the prefect's house, from where we were to motor with him to Toul. He could not go with us, as he was out investigating the damage of the night before, but one of his daughters was waiting for us in the Prefecture motor.

Le Grand Couronné was but a ridge of mist and clouds as we passed out of town, but it was there that the Germans were held up and Nancy was saved that first September of the war, there that was written the *paraphe de Castelnau*, and from there the German Emperor had looked into France.

I never should have known Lorraine if I had not seen it gray and wet under its autumn skies, bands of lemon and amber at sunset finishing the garb of its gray days. As we sped along I could just distinguish the landscape —villages lost in the immense stretch of the plains, and great forests of beech and oak in which are strange, mysterious ponds (*étangs*), and before my mind passed for an instant images of those solitaries of the twilight centuries, slipping through them with staff and scrip, after the Romans, and bringing to the land the things Rome tried to destroy.

A beautifully kept straight road leads to Toul. From time to time one sees rusty barbed-wire entanglements and camouflaged trenches, for, on this road, had the Germans taken Nancy, they would have come to Toul, as they did in 1870. Outside the town are double ramparts, where the guard stopped us, but the military

chauffeur cried the magic words, "*Monsieur le Préfet,*" and we passed in through the Porte de Metz, dating from the time of Vauban, then skirted the town, to get to the barracks of Luxembourg, where hundreds of little children, first gathered together by Madame Mirman, are now being taken care of by the American Red Cross. It is conducted by Doctor Sedgwick, unfortunately in Paris. It seemed a dreary spot that afternoon, and it has since been confided to me that the weather is always dreadful there. The barracks are after the new model of groups of one-storied houses, which, it appears, have also disadvantages, as well as the large buildings they superseded.[1]

It was raining and hailing and blowing as we made blind dashes from one to the other with the French directors. A consolation to find oneself in the dormitories where many blessed tiny babies lay asleep (or howling!) in little cots or perambulators, out of the horrid cold.

They are not always orphans, but their mothers work in the fields of Lorraine or in the munitions-factories. Doctor Peel, second in charge, came at last from a distant building, and met us in the school-room, out of which a hundred noisy, warm, well-fed children were scuffling. Tea was offered us, but we came away; time was short and I was a-hungered, after the cold, windy, wet desolation of the Luxembourg barracks, for a sight of the beautiful cathedral.

Some one said, "Why 'sight-seeing'?" but I said, "It's soul-seeing." And there was some lifting of the being as we stepped into the loveliness of the pale-gray vaulting of the church of St.-Étienne. At the end of the

[1] The American Red Cross Asylum at Luxembourg (Toul), now under the very able management of Dr. Maynard Ladd, has accommodations for nearly a thousand children, well and ill, and a maternity hospital. The American forces hold the line to the northwest of Toul.

apse was an immense, high, narrow, blue window, and it reminded me of Huysmans's phrase about the cathedral of Chartres, "*Une blonde aux yeux bleus.*" We stepped over worn *pierres tombales*, and as I stood on one of them, whose date, scarcely decipherable, was fifteen hundred and something, I looked up and saw in the wall a new marble plaque, and it was to the memory of "*Jean Bourhis, aviateur-pilote, chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, Croix de Guerre, né 1888. . . . Mort glorieusement pour la Patrie, le 22 mars, 1916.*" And so one's thoughts are jerked from the past into the dreadful, sacramental present.

Close by the cathedral is the Hôtel de Ville, once the Episcopal Palace, a gem of the eighteenth century. We stepped from the little square in front of the church into the wet, wind-swept garden. At one end is a flat, round fountain, and behind it is a moss-grown statue of a woman in contemplation, and one side of the garden is hedged in by the flying buttresses and gargoyles of the cathedral. Broad, low steps lead down to its gravel walks from the terrace of the Palace, onto which open long windows, forming a great hemicycle. I did not need to see it under warm, sunset skies, with the linden-trees of the garden in full blossom, to be possessed of its charm.

An American soldier was coming out of the cathedral as we issued from the garden in a gust of wind which blew my umbrella wrong side out, and when I and it were righted he was gone. But it's all a part of history.

We went for a moment to St.-Gengoult, the old Gothic church in the rue Carnot. (Like every town in Lorraine and in the whole of France there is a rue Carnot, and it's horribly monotonous when your soul is aflame.)

As we entered, a thick rich light came through the ancient windows.

A black-robed woman was sobbing before a grave and pitying statue of St.-Anne—sixteenth or seventeenth century, I didn't know which—and a pale, tiny child with a frightened look was standing by her. Again I thought on the oceans of fear children have passed through in this war, and again I besought God to take care of His world.

As I passed up the central aisle I saw two American soldiers kneeling before the high altar. That spot of khaki and its young, unmistakable silhouette under the gray vaulting of that old church suddenly seemed momentous beyond anything I had ever seen. It was the country of my birth and my love pursuing its gigantic destiny down an endless vista, crowded with uncountable khaki-clad forms, men with souls. The two anonymous soldiers became typical of each and every Miles Gloriosus since the world began, and as they knelt there on the altar steps I knew that they had been laid on that other dreadful altar of the world's sin. . . .

An open door showed us the way to a lovely Gothic cloister of the sixteenth century, surrounding a tree- and flower-planted court. It had a few fresh chippings on its *belle patine*, the results of a bomb which fell in it a few months ago.

Long lines of soldiers' socks were hung on strings across one corner of it, and soldiers were sitting in a little room-like corridor, leading I know not where, reading newspapers, whistling and writing. Then, out through a delightful sixteenth-century door into the streets, the loveliness of Toul imagined rather than really perceived, for the rain was falling again. Khaki-clad men of the *Division marocaine*, together with blue-clad companions, were threading their way through the

narrow streets, and there were few women and children. I thought how I had seen the two towers of the church shining from afar as I passed by in the train that June evening with the two Bretons whose fate I shall never know. . . . Did the one from Nantes return to hold his first-born in his arms? Or the fiancé return to consummate his nuptials?

Then I caught sight of my own two soldiers standing at the door of a little tobacco-shop. I suppose it was the nearest resemblance to anything familiar in Toul, and they were rather cuddling up to it. They smiled broadly when they heard themselves addressed in what they termed the "blessed lingo," and called it "some luck."

"I was just thinking, 'me for the coop,'" genially continued the biggest, raw-boned, lantern-jawed one who had a bad bronchial cold and wore a muffler about his throat. He turned out to be from Omaha; the smaller one was from Hackensack, N. J. (with an emphasis on the N. J.). We talked about simple and unglorious matters, what they had for breakfast, among other things, and it was, in parenthesis, what any Frenchman would call a dinner—ham and eggs and oatmeal and white bread (which none save American soldiers get in France these days) and jam and coffee. They were from Pagny-sur-Meuse near by—pronounced "Pag-ni" by the Omaha man. The Hackensack man avoided it. He quite simply wanted "the war to begin," so that he might "show the Germans how."

"We're sure to lick 'em in the spring," the one with the cold said, "but it's a long time waiting for the fun to begin, and I haven't been warm since I got here."

I asked them how they came into France.

"All I know is that after we got off the boat we were three days in some sort of a milk-train; there wasn't

room to sit, let alone lie. We drew lots and I got the baggage-rack; but what saved us was that we could get out at every station, and, believe me, the fellows that got drunk were the only ones that pulled in all right—the others were sent up to hospital soon as they arrived."

In the best and most persuasive of Y. M. C. A. manners I said to this special Miles Gloriosus:

"It isn't a remedy, however, that you could really count on."

"But I say," answered the Omaha man, "you'll own up that it's worth trying."

It was getting late and, the Omaha man having the best of it, we parted with smiles of mutual appreciation. It's all so simple—and so momentous.

Then back to Nancy, running swiftly over a white road, the gray sky very low, and on either side green and yellow and brown fields, and the oak and beech forest of Haye. The *Grand Couronné* for a moment was divested of its mists, and some brightening of the western sky touched its ridge with a subdued splendor; and then we got into Nancy and were deposited at the Prefecture, where we made our adieux. We proceeded to the garage of a stoutish, blond man of pronounced Teuton type and accent, with an uncertain smile—and a coreless heart, I think—who cranked *la Ford* (by the way, Fords change their sex in France), and we started out through the town that night was enveloping, with but one dull eye to light us to Lunéville. We thought the trip might prove fairly uncertain, but didn't know how much so till there was an impact, in the crowded suburb, and a horse's form with legs in air, looking as big as a monster of the Pliocene age, showed for an instant on our radiator, then fell to the ground. A crowd immediately gathered, while the driver of the

cart proceeded to tell us what he thought of us in particular and women drivers in general. But, though unfortunate, we felt blameless, as the horse had been tied *behind* the wagon standing at the curb and there was no light, except something very dim coming from a greengrocer's. We departed to the *commissaire de police* with the man and a couple of gendarmes, explained that we were willing to do anything and everything if he would only let us proceed to Lunéville, gave the magic name "Commission Californienne," and equally potent reference to the *Préfet de la Meurthe et Moselle* whose house we had just left. Then with beating hearts and a chastened outlook on life—I use the word "outlook" rather wildly; we couldn't see anything—we passed out through the great manufacturing district. Every now and then our feeble ray was swallowed up by the great lamps of a military auto or the large round headlight of a *camion*. As we passed through St.-Nicolas du Port and Dombasle the blue of the soldiers' tunics took on a strange ghoul-like color, a white incandescent sort of gray, and the moving forms seemed twice their natural size. We couldn't see the streets at all, and the only thing we wanted to do in all the world was to get to Lunéville and run *la Ford* into the garage of M. Guérin.

When that was accomplished we decided to say goodby to the proud world, sent regrets to Mlle. Guérin, and had a much more modest repast served in my room by the deft maid, whose husband got typhoid fever in the trenches and died at Epinal last year. Later the mistress of the house came up to know if we were comfortable, and told us her husband, too, had died of it in hospital at Toul. And then I read *Les Vieux Châteaux de la Vesouze*, a modern *Etude lorraine*, and *Promenades autour de Lunéville*, printed in 1838, to the accompaniment of rattling windows and the heavy boom of dis-

tant cannon. All else was quiet. Near my room is a device plastered on the wall, *Qui tient à sa tranquillité sait respecter celle des autres.* Isn't it nice? It makes one steal in at night, get into slippers immediately, and ring gently in the morning.

It is still raining, hailing, blowing—dreadfully discouraging weather to investigate the amours of the eighteenth century, and I have a couple of twentieth-century idyls right under my eyes, too. I had planned a stroll in the park to trace the steps of Léopold and Stanislas to the doors of the fairest of ladies, and Panpan and St.-Lambert and the Chevalier de Boufflers, and all the other *charmeurs.* I'll either have to leave them out of the Journal or do them in some half-dream when I'm back in Paris and warm! What *they* did in this sort of weather I don't know, except that when they knocked at a door or tapped at a window they were sure of tender welcomes, they and the easy verses that accompanied them.

CHAPTER IV

A STROLL IN NANCY

October 15th.

I SPENT yesterday a-wandering in the old streets of Nancy, between gusts of wind and rain and great bursts of sun. After much coaxing, *la Ford* was cajoled into taking the road at 9.30, but as we got to Nancy and into the Place Stanislas suddenly her front wheels spread apart. E. M. gave one glance, but not at all the glance of despair she would have given had it happened on the road, and then flew to seek her waiting bridegroom at the Hôtel Excelsior et d'Angleterre, while I, less enthusiastically, sought the blond chauffeur of the coreless heart. He seemed quite human, as, unscrewing the bar in front, which crumbled softly like a piece of bread, he held up a piece and said, "*C'était fait pour vous casser le cou.*"

Seeing the American flag flying from the ground-floor window of one of the beautiful old buildings of the Place Stanislas, I went in to find Mrs. Dawson installed in charge of the Nancy branch of the "American Fund for French Wounded." It was another novelty for Stanislas to look upon out of his *right* eye! He's been kept busy, these past three years, looking about him. The large room was filled with furniture M. Mirman is collecting for refugees—wardrobes, tables, chairs, in and on which were piles of shirts, vests, sweaters, *cachenez*, handker-

chiefs, all from over the ocean. And really, when one investigates the comfort-bags filled by too-generous American hands, one has a cupidous feeling. There is a lavishness in the matter of Colgate's tooth-paste, for instance, which one can rarely get for love, and not at all for money, in Paris!

I came away in a gray, slanting rain that made the Place Stanislas look as if Raffaello had done it over and framed it beautifully in gray. Great scratchings of rainfall, and soldiers and women hurrying through it. But *le geste* is not like the days when Raffaello painted —there are no skirts to lift up, or, rather, none that need lifting.

Then I crossed over to the Place de la Carrière, where *souvent en ces aimables lieux des héros et des demi-dieux* had held their tournaments, and then into the church of St.-Epvre to get a Mass. The stained-glass windows, modern and very expensive-looking, were crisscrossed with broad stripes of paper on the side toward the railway, where the shocks from the frequent bombing of the station are especially felt. Everywhere in Nancy the windows are broken, or crisscrossed with paper, or both. The church was blue with military.

Afterward I walked through the Grande Rue. The ducal palace of the early sixteenth century, begun by René II, has its door scaffolded and sandbagged. It is the celebrated *Musée Lorrain*, whose treasures are now removed further from the frontier. It is here that the body of Charles III lay in such magnificence that there arose the saying in the sixteenth century that the three most gorgeous ceremonies in the world were the consecration of a king of France at Reims, the crowning of an emperor of Germany at Frankfort, and the obsequies of a duke of Lorraine at Nancy.

I continued down the Grande Rue between groups of *poilus*, officers, and the usual Sunday population coming from Mass, or getting in last dinner provisions, to the Porte de Graffe of the fourteenth century, beyond which is the Porte de la Citadelle, and then the garrison. As one walks along, the snatches of talk one overhears are "*Bombardé deux fois*," "*Pas un vitre qui reste*," "*Volant très-bas*," etc.

I came back through the park. In it is a modern iron bandstand, fortunately copied after the delicious designs of Jean Lamour—only *he* would have done something to relieve the heavy iron roof. And he quite certainly caught his inspiration musing about the park one autumn day, for everywhere I saw charming repetitions of his *grilles* in that delicate tracery of yellow leaf against gray trunk and branch.

Old houses give on the park, where one might dream dreams, and find the world—perhaps well lost. Many windows broken, and more crisscrossing with bands of paper.

It was getting to be 12.30 when, having been as much of an angel as the three dimensions permit, I emerged on to the Place Stanislas to see E. M. approaching with a young blue-clad aviator, with something distinguished yet modest in his bearing, of whom I instantly thought he is one of those *qui cherche sa récompense plutôt dans les yeux de ses hommes que dans les notes de ses chefs*—and so it proved to be. He didn't even wear the *brisquets* of his years of service on his arm.

"*Tout le monde sait que je n'ai pas été trois ans sans rien faire*," he said, later, during lunch, which we took in the Café Stanislas, crowded with gallooned and decorated officers. Several red-and-white marked autos of the General Staff were waiting before the door, where

Stanislas also could see them, and those beings, half human, half divine, of the sky-line, framed it all. Afterward I again removed my three dimensions, hunting for M. Pierre Boyé, the great authority on all things of Lorraine, M. Guérin having given me a letter to him. On arriving at the house, through quiet gray streets, there was no answer to my numerous ringings of the bell, so I came back, drawn irresistibly to the Place Stanislas. By this time it was aglow in the afternoon light; great masses of clouds even at 3.30 were tinted with yellow and orange, and every inch of gilding caught the light. I hailed an antique cab and drove out where I could look over rolling stretches of country, along the road to Toul. The brown and yellow fields were aglow, the bronzing forests, too; above were piled the high and splendid clouds of autumnal Lorraine, and I saw where Claude le Lorrain had got *his* masses. The *cocher* then proceeded to bring me back to town by a perfectly hideous road, called Quai Claude le Lorrain—on one side the blackened railway, on the other modern claptrappy houses with their windows shattered and their roofs damaged.

I then told him to take me to the church of the Cordeliers, where I stepped suddenly, not only into its late afternoon dimness, but into the dimness of past ages. A shaft of light from a high window showed me a dull, rich bit of color on an ancient pillar, in a sort of chapel; and then my eye fell on what I had come to see, the tomb of the Duchesse Philippe de Gueldre, widow of René II, bearing the incomparable stamp of the genius of Ligier Richier.

I tiptoed toward the stone slab where that great lady of another age is lying asleep, clad in the dark robe of the Poor Clares. Her hands, folded downward, are clasped at her waist. Under the cowl the pale head is

turned gently, as if in sleep.[1] She is an enduring image of resignation, not alone for herself, but for all of us who live and die, we don't quite know how or why, and who must "endure our going hence even as our coming hither."

The church was constructed by her husband, René II, Duke of Lorraine, to commemorate the deliverance of Nancy and the defeat of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, in 1477. Duke René himself had a glorious reign; for him the arts and letters were the ornament of victory. I discovered a commemorative monument of my friend Duke Léopold, flanked rather flamboyantly by unquiet, yet charming, statues of Faith and Hope! Also an elaborate statue of Katerina Opalinska, the consort of Stanislas, who, though he had been somewhat forgetful of her in life, had done really all that a wife could wish in the matter of the tomb. But some virtue more mystic than the decorative Faith and Hope of the eighteenth century exhaled from the quiet figure of Philippe de Gueldre.

Near the high altar is the Chapelle Ronde begun by Charles III, the grandson of René, in 1607, intended as a sepulcher for the princes of Lorraine, and in a beautiful *grille* are entwined the arms of Lorraine and Austria. Then the sacristan came in to light the candles of the high altar, the church got suddenly quite dark,

[1] Her epitaph, written by herself, is to the effect that underneath lies a rotting worm, giving to death the tribute of nature, the earth her only covering, and begging her sisters, the Poor Clares, to say for her a *Requiescat in pace.*

Ci-gist un ver tout en pourriture,
Donnant à mort le tribut de la nature.
Sœur Philippe de Gueldre fust Royne du passé,
Terre soulat pour toute couverture.
Sœurs, dites-lui une requiescat in pace.

MDXLVII.

from the organ came the strains of "*O quam suavis est, Domine,*" and people began to come in to Benediction. The blue and vermilion and gold of the mausoleum of René II faded and one saw only vague outlines of saints and angels, and a figure of the Eternal Father. It cried out of that other deliverance of Nancy; but when the world war is over will his widow, Philippe de Gueldre, *conjunx Piissimi*, still be sleeping quietly, her brown cowl over her head and her crown at her feet? Her soul "conducted to Paradise by angels, where martyrs received her and led her into the Holy City Jerusalem." The church got quite full, the organist continued to play early Italian music, and the "Pietà, Signor" of Pergolese rose as I knelt by Philippe de Gueldre. The great cope of the priest shone, the smell of incense pervaded the dim spaces, the "*Tantum Ergo*" sounded, and I bowed my head. . . .

Then out into a world of fading light, found the *cocher* in the exact attitude I had left him, and begged him to drive quickly (which was impossible) to the Hôtel Excelsior et d'Angleterre, bethinking me of the 5.30 train to Lunéville. As we went through the dim, charming streets I remembered an old verse I had found in one of M. Guérin's books, by an unreservedly admiring individual, who said that if he had one foot in Paradise and the other in Nancy, he would withdraw the one in Paradise, that both might be in Nancy!

I found waiting at the door of the hotel E. M., the *distingué* young aviator, and Don Kelley, *en permission* for twenty-four hours from Gondrecourt, strong and eager, since a week at Gondrecourt, since a month in France for the first time in his life.

The young men took us to the station and deposited us in the train and made their adieux. For very special reasons at that moment I said to E. M.:

"If you are going back to Lunéville on *my* account, don't!"

The guard had closed the door of the compartment, had sounded his whistle, but I caught the look in her eye and out we jumped, returning to the hotel, where we gave what we hoped was a pleasant surprise party. *Dîner à quatre* at seven o'clock. About a dozen Americans *en permission* were dining among many Frenchmen, and we amused ourselves investigating the multicolored intricacies of the various uniforms, aviators, cavalry, infantry, artillery, and the many "grades." Then again a dash for the station—Count de L. had to get to Paris, and Don Kelley to Gondrecourt. The latter said, as we stood in the dark, battered station:

"I am where I would most want to be in the world, and, though I am an only son, I am where my parents would most wish me to be. When I get back to Gondrecourt and get into that long, dark shed and see the men rolled up, and if it is raining, the water dripping in, I shall know it is the real thing, and those of my generation who have known it and those who have not will be forever divided."

Permissions not being among things safely trifled with, we then saw them into their train, which was leaving first, and crossed the rails to where ours, dark, filled with returning officers, was waiting; and so out into the night with all curtains carefully drawn, the stars shining. It was a *nuit à boches*, one of the officers said, continuing, "It's often an obsession with them—for a long time they won't come near Nancy or Lunéville, and then every night when it is at all clear they appear." The inhabitants can choose (in their minds) between good weather and *avions* or bad weather and safety.

Trains from Nancy to Lunéville seem to have a way of hunting up stations, threading them up, and what

one does easily in three-quarters of an hour in a motor takes an hour and a half to three, according to the stops. At Blainville we descended to show our *sauf-conduits*, the guard standing just behind a convenient puddle that every one splashed into and then stepped out of. Finally, Lunéville, night-enveloped, lighted only with flashes from electric pocket-lamps, like great fireflies. And coming through the night from Nancy, I kept thinking how France had done enough, more than enough, the impossible, and what a cold and dreadful grind the war had become, and of untried young Americans sleeping in dim villages so near. And many other things that it is bootless to record. *Nous sommes dedans.*

CHAPTER V

VITRIMONT IN AUTUMN

OUT of Lunéville over the muddy Vesouze, through the Place Brûlée, and onto a pasty road, E. M. driving, and, on the back seat, newly wedded love. As we left the town a dwarf made a face at us and then turned his back on us with a not over-elegant gesture, for all the world like the tales of the famous dwarf Bébé, during years the delight of the Court of Stanislas.

Mustard and osier plantings became the intensest yellow or red, as the sun fell on them through rifts in dark clouds, and many women, old men, and children were working in wet beet-root fields, among little groupings of black crosses. . . .

We got into Vitrimont through streets deep in mud. Such a change! Before reaching it, instead of the skeleton outline of homes one now sees orderly rows of red roofs. The work that had seemed almost stationary, pursued with so much difficulty by Comtesse de B. (Miss Polk), had got suddenly to a point where it began to show, though the finished houses will be too damp for habitation this winter, and, like a lot of other things, must await the spring.

Everywhere in the streets the busy work of reconstruction is proceeding. Soldiers billeted in Vitrimont are coming and going, helping with masonry, bringing in great wagons of beet-root, as if they had always lived

there; not *en passant par la Lorraine*. It's a very human document, this billeting of soldiers; though, as far as they are concerned, when they leave a village they only change their residence. For the women the thing is much more serious. *They* get a change of regiment. However, I have no time to muse on this detail of the war. Things in Vitrimont were simply taking their inevitable course. Nothing is held back for long, with the generations pressing thick and fast. Black-aproned children with books on their backs, to whom E. M. gave little slabs of chocolate, were coming from the new school-house. Old men were hobbling about, and women bending over embroidery frames, in houses often half destroyed and hastily roofed over. In the old days Lorraine furnished beautiful damasks and gold galloons and laces to Paris and Versailles.

We stopped by a window where a thin-faced woman was just taking from its frame a beautiful beaded bag such as one would buy very, very dear in the Rue de la Paix. Near her sat an old woman, her mother, the light falling on her pale, withered face, wearing a great black-bowed head-dress, a yellow cat in her lap. It was an *intérieur* that would have done honor to any great museum.

We visited Mlle. Antoine, living in a reconstructed street named after a Polish prince. She escaped to Lunéville with her servant on the day of the entry of the Germans into the village, August 23, 1914, fleeing through the ancient forest, but returned to her Lares and Penates a few days afterward with German passes. She represents culture in the village, and is clear-eyed, sweet-voiced, but with two red spots on her cheeks—she is fighting off consumption by living out of doors with her chickens and live stock, in sabots and apron and shawl. A beautiful old desk was in her living-room,

MISS POLK'S WEDDING

The Comtesse de Buyer (Miss Polk) on the arm of Monsieur Mirman, Prefect of the Meurthe et Moselle, after her wedding at Vitrimont, September, 1917.

and there was a discussion as to whether it was Louis XVI or Directoire, but under any name one would have loved to possess it. The windows looked out onto the inevitable dung-heap, but beyond were bronzing forests, and, in between, fields the color of semi-precious stones.

Hearing the sound of music as we passed the church, we went in and found some young girls were practising a "*Credo*," clustered about the little organ, and wearing brooches with a device of thistle and double Lorraine cross that Madame de Buyer had given them on her wedding-day. I looked again upon the lovely old fifteenth-century vaulting, fully restored, shifting my eye hurriedly from the hideous but seemingly imperishable dado with its design of painted folds of cloth. At the door the little holy water fonts, formed of shells held upon two heads of seraphim, gave me a thrill of joy—and sadness, too, that beauty is so perishable.

Then I turned to the cemetery. The little pathways were muddy beneath the leafless trees. Bead crosses and wreaths and a few stunted chrysanthemums decorated the wet graves. All seasons are the same to the dead. I stood by a breach in the wall near the grave of "*Charles Carron, musicien, souvenir d'un camarade, 31 août, 1914*," looking out toward the forest of Vitrimont. Its autumn garb was soft, discreet, and lovely; more jasper and amethyst and chrysoprase and cornelian fields rolled gently in between it and me. There was the band of yellow like a Greek border to a garment in the western sky—only that and nothing more, yet some beauty and sadness chained me to the spot. Quail and woodcock, gray pheasant and larks, were flying about, and some strongly marked black-and-white magpies were pecking at something in the nearest field. I asked myself again, "What is it that stamps Lorraine with such beauty?" General de Buyer told me that when

Pierre Loti came to Vitrimont he said, "*C'est trop vert,*" and perhaps, after Stamboul and Egypt and the Grecian Isles, it would seem too green. But I saw, returning there in autumn, that the soul of Lorraine, *l'élégante et douleureuse*, is like unto tarnished silver, with its grays, yellows, browns, and purples; that soul that has suffered, hoped through the generations, whose abiding-places have been devastated and rebuilt through the centuries. And I knew that one must see it in autumn, beneath the wasteful splendors of gray clouds, with their hints of color, red, brown, yellow, and purple, or with sky and rain melting into one, curtaining the brown, mysterious earth—and, in between, the beat of the human heart.

It all seemed to show itself through some dissolving light of ages. Those secular beeches, that I had first seen in their tenderest green, had become a brilliant yellow, and were turned to the south. The great bronze oaks looked to the north, obeying laws as inviolable as those of the human beings passing beneath them. In all these forests round about Vitrimont, Parroy, and Mondon the legendary lords of the country hunted; the roads of Gaul disappeared under the great Roman highways which traversed Lorraine from Langres to Trèves, from Toul to Metz, and again from Langres to Strasburg. The name Lunéville emerges out of the night of the tenth century in the person of Étienne, Bishop of Toul, successor of St.-Gérard, and Folmar I, Count of Lunéville, was married to Sparhilde, descended from Charlemagne. (To this day I notice that almost any one who respects himself in these parts talks quite casually of being descended from Charlemagne, or Charles the Bald, or René the Victorious, as a Boston man might of the Pilgrim Fathers.) Folmar's hunting-lodge was by the muddy Vesouze, over which one passes to get from Lunéville to Vitrimont. In time it was

transformed into a château, and around it grew a village, which in turn became a fortified town, then the capital of Léopold and Stanislas.

I stood for a long time by that 1914 breach in the wall, and the grave of *Charles Carron, musicien*, looking out over the rolling fields in the late October afternoon, migrating birds passing against the amber sky, red vines floating from the yellowing branches of oaks and beeches; near me was a tangle of wild-plum bushes, stiffened blackberry-vines, and dried ramie. All except the deeds of men seemed sweet. Everything was in sinuous lines, inclosing the jasper, amethyst, chrysoprase, russet, jewels of the fields, through which flow the slow rivers, slipping between bushes of osier and plum, and somewhere there is a slower, nigrescent canal scarcely a-move between willows and poplars. And those men who are out there where that dull thunder is! . . .

I thought how often in her history the men that hunted in her forests or tilled her fields had reddened them with their blood, or, buried in them, had increased the harvests, fighting now against one invader, now another, being continually thrown back from power to power like a ball, with nothing changeless save the changelessness of their changing destiny — and its unescapableness.

And how, under Godefroy de Bouillon, a Lorraine prince, the Crusades began, and under a duke of Lorraine, Charles V, they ended. And of the holy glory of Jeanne d'Arc. And now, after the lapse of centuries, of the covenant of our own men.

I realized that the beauty of Lorraine is not entirely of the natural world.

As we drove back there was a sudden flaming up of that band of lemon. The western sky became a vast ocean of pink with great white clouds afloat in it. The

red roofs of Lunéville were transfigured, a crimson glow was flung about the Pompadour towers of the church, outlined against a blue-white eastern sky. But only for a few minutes. The streets of Lunéville were already dim as we passed in through the battered suburbs.

We stopped for tea at the house of Madame —— on the outskirts of the town. It had been occupied by the Germans that first August, and in one of the *salons* was a large hole in the wall, stopped up, but not replastered or papered. "They" had rolled up her rugs and given them to her, and she and her four young daughters had lived in the upper stories during the occupation, and seen war very close from their windows. The only really valuable picture, a Claude Lorrain, I think, was missing. In the cellars and in the garden, whose walls are still breached and broken, dead and wounded, living and fighting, Germans and French, had lain.

The usual conjunction of elderly officers and young aviators were there for tea. Then E. M. and I, closely linked, threaded the black streets to the Hôtel des Vosges. And there is great sadness in Lorraine in autumn.

CHAPTER VI

AT THE GUÉRINS'

October 16th.

IN the park of the château, sitting on an old stone bench under yellowing chestnut-trees.

Soldiers are coming and going. The château has been for many years a barracks. One guardian of the park, of the now so-despised race of gendarmes, has walked by three times, for I have my little note-book in my lap and my pencil in my hand and I am plainly not of Lunéville. He is just passing me again, and I say:

"*C'est beau, le parc.*"

He answers, "Perhaps in summer," evidently not stirred by autumnal Lorraine, and then, "*Madame est en visite?*"

I answer, "Yes, with Miss Crocker."

That name being magic in these parts, he salutes and passes on.

Of the lovely old bosquets where Stanislas combined his *jets d'eau*, his *grottes*, his Chinese pavilions, and his *parterres*, the long avenue and the great flat basin of the fountain, in which black swans are floating, are all that remain. From the end of this avenue can be seen the aviation field with its great hangars. The low terraces have borders of autumn flowers, dahlias, chrysanthemums, red vines, dead leaves, and moss-grown and charming statues of ancient love-making gods,

who came into their own again in those amorous days. There is a statue to M. Guérin's poet son born and dead between two invasions, but a lovely eighteenth-century statue of a veiled woman renders *mou* and without accent the flat, white-marble shaft that commemorates his earthly span (1874–1908). The statue of Erckmann is also in the nineteenth-century manner. Is the human race as uncharming as modern sculptors would make it? One feels apologetic toward the ages to come, and one wants to cry out that we weren't so bad, after all, and that seemingly soulless individual in a frock-coat and baggy trousers and top-hat, looking so unattractive in white marble, was really a delightful person, an imaginative lover, a perceptive intellectual, and witty to boot. He would have been the first to protest against his memorial; and how he would have hated the geraniums and begonias planted at his base, and the wire fencing!

Beyond the park, where the trees have been cleared away, is the brown, reedy Vesouze, a little border of old houses on its banks. Beyond is the rolling stretch of forest-covered hills and russet and jasper and topaz fields, and above it all the sunless and gray, but strangely luminous, noonday heaven of autumnal Lorraine.

Later.

Wandered about the town. Everywhere charming bits of *autrefois* arrest the eye. Over one doorway, between two angels' heads of pure Louis XV, was written, "*Fais bien, laisses dire.*" A little farther along, under a figureless niche, "*Si le cœur t'en dit un ave pour son âme.*" In the window of a pharmacy near by, occupying a good old house with flat, gray façade, is a big Lunéville porcelain jar bearing the words "*Theriaca celestis,*" interwoven among flowered scrolls, and I

thought of eighteenth-century servants going in for herbs and various cures for masters and mistresses having "vapors."

The portal of the church reminds me, with its rich, wine-colored tones, of the *tezontle* of the Mexican houses of the viceregal period. The words over the door are "*Au Dieu de Paix*," the God that this torn borderland seldom receives, and still rarely keeps, and above is a figure of Chronos, or the Almighty, I don't know which.

A large black marble slab without name or date is near the door as one passes in; underneath lie the remains of Voltaire's *divine Emilie*.[1] Having loved much, let us hope much was forgiven her. The choir, pulpit, and confessionals are very pure Louis XV. Over the organ-loft are the words "*Laudate Deum in chordis et organo*," painted in among Pompadour knots which have been democratically colored red, white, and blue, near blue and gold fleurs-de-lys of another epoch.

Against the wall of the façade is a marble urn that once contained the heart of Stanislas, who was very devout, and left no stone unturned, though he continued to love not alone the arts, to placate the final judge. He was very fond of music while dining, but on Friday never permitted any except that of the harp, considered less earthly than violin and clavecin. He never missed Mass; he was merciful to the poor and

[1] Madame du Châtelet, around whose death-bed three men met in fraternal tolerance, Voltaire, St.-Lambert, and her husband, was buried here September 11, 1749. In 1793 the tomb was profaned, the lead coffin stolen, the bones scattered. In 1858 they were gathered up and put in a modern coffin in which they now repose. She said of herself: "*J'ai reçu de Dieu une de ces âmes tendres et immuables qui ne savent ni déguiser ni modérer leurs passions; qui ne connaissent ni l'affaiblissement ni le dégoût, et dont la ténacité sait résister à tout, même à la certitude de n'être pas aimée. . . . Mais un cœur aussi tendre, peut-il être rempli par un sentiment aussi paisible et aussi faible que l'amitié?*"

appreciative of the things of the mind. Not a bad showing; one hopes he's happy somewhere.

In one of the side altars is a Pietà and three long lists of those just dead for France, whose

> graves are all too young as yet
> To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
> Its charge to each;

and then, as I sat quietly thinking upon the passing of heroes, Shelley's immortal words kept sounding in my ears:

> And if the seal is set,
> Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
> Break it not thou! . . .
> From the world's bitter wind
> Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
> What Adonaïs is, why fear we to become?

Lunched at the Guérins'. *La Ford* being the only means of locomotion in Lunéville, not even an old horse remaining to pull a cab, we had to give up the trip to Baccarat, and indeed any trip anywhere. Delighted to be able to *flâner* in the old streets without my umbrella being turned wrong side out.

Overhead the *avions* were thick; we counted twelve at one time, some of them flying so low that we could hear words. Observation airplanes, bombarding airplanes, the swift *avions de chasse*, going in the direction of the forest of Parroy, where the Germans are intrenched since the retreat from Lunéville, September, 1914. Parroy and all that part of the country was completely laid waste in 1636 by Richelieu, who sent the cheerful report to Louis XIV that "Lorraine was reduced to nothing, and the inhabitants dead for the most part."

That conquest of the unsubstantial air seems the greatest of all man's achievements. And as I walked

along there was an almost perceptible flinging of my soul into the heavenly spaces and I thought not on battles and wrecks nor even of hungry children, but rather of the discoverers of nature's secrets, the disciples of philosophers, the undiscourageable lovers of the arts, who everywhere are in the minority, and everywhere reach the heights, and everywhere in the end control the hosts, even of battle. And at the sudden dropping of the sun over the lovely Lorraine fields, become blue with scarcely a hint of the green and brown and amethyst of a moment ago, the band of yellow fringing the horizon—though with me walked the ghosts of men who at the word of command invaded or defended—I was not sad. A lean, brown, unexpectant urchin entered the town with me. I gave him a two-franc piece and a blessing, *Pax tibi*, which last, from the look in his eyes, some part of him understood. Then I turned into the beautiful old house of the mayor where *goûter* and bridge had been arranged for us. I rapped with a large and very bright wrought-iron knocker bearing the date 1781, and, entering, found myself in a great hallway; to the left is the *escalier d'honneur*, with its beautiful wrought-iron balustrade. I mounted it, and passed through many rooms of noble yet thoroughly livable dimensions. They were filled with officers, some women came from their hospital service in nursing garb, groups of bright-eyed "*filles à marier*," and a few young aviators. The large *salon* has beautiful panelings, with heavy gilt *motifs* of tambour, torch, helmet and shield in the corners. In it was signed the celebrated Traité de Lunéville, 1801, and it is all very seigneurial.

I found myself seated at a table with the mayor, General —— and Mme. de C., in nursing garb. I investigated, during a couple of hours, the surprises of

the erratic yet brilliant bridge of the *maire de Lunéville*, whose delight was to mystify his partner as well as the adversary, and who, without in the least deserving it, won every rubber. I had a few bad "distractions," but who would not. under that roof so rich in memories?

During the occupation in 1914 the German generals and high officers entering the town were lodged on the second floor of the old house. The same thing had happened in 1870.

We came away in pitch darkness at 7.30, but I can now skip and bound about the dark streets, with the best of them, no more feeling around for curbs, which seem again to be placed where they are to be expected.

Afterward, dinner at M. Guérin's. General and Mme. de Buyer, General ——, M. Guérin's two sons, one a mitrailleuse officer for the moment near by at Blainville la Grande, the other the student and lover of the arts of whom I spoke, and whose every instinct is remote from killing. I sometimes wonder at the stillness of men like that—except that there is nothing to be done about it. General de Buyer told us of *lances-flamme*, of *flamme-snappes*, of the *obus asphyxiants*, which burst without odor or smoke, but are deadly, all the same. Then the conversation turned on *le conflit historique entre la race germanique et la nation gauloise* which had begun before the Roman conquest. M. Guérin told us of places where still may be seen colossal walls and thick, crumbling towers, mysterious witness of those legendary conflicts, just as the Place des Carmes, or Place Brûlée, is witness of those of 1917.

The younger Guérin son was preparing to go into diplomacy when the war broke out. I said, "Perhaps we will sometime be *en poste* together," and a strange

look that the pleasant dinner scene did not allow me to interpret immediately came over his face.

"*Peut-être*," he answered, slowly.

I knew a moment afterward that that young man who loves his life was thinking, "if I am alive." He has seen so many fall. And suddenly came into my mind the lines of his poet brother, born and dead between two invasions:

> *Nous sommes, ô mon Dieu, plusieurs dans la cité,*
> *A porter haut le lys de la mysticité, . . .*

And for an infinitesimal moment, in spite of the pleasant evening meal, my thoughts, too, turned to invisibilities—his and my last end, and our veiled destinies.

CHAPTER VII

ACROSS LORRAINE

LUNÉVILLE, *Tuesday, October 16th.*

ONE last look at the church, whose warm and lovely towers with their *motifs* of urn and scroll and angel were shining pinkly in the morning light. Then through the door of the Hôtel de Ville, built on the site of the ancient abbey of St.-Rémy, founded in the last years of the tenth century by Folmar de Lunéville for the repose of his soul and of his wife's, and completely done over in the eighteenth century. As I turned in at the passageway leading through to the other street, old houses on one side, and on the other plantings of holly against the church walls, I thought of the saying of the Middle Ages, "*Il fait bon vivre sous la crosse*" ("It is good to live under the bishops"), and how the peasants would come in from their hamlets, through the fields and forests, with their tithes. The monks generally springing from the people showed themselves more understanding of their wants and their miseries, and were less apt to overtax them, having fewer needs, than the lords with their wars, their ambitions, and their grandeurs.

Then one finds oneself in the garden of the Hôtel de Ville, where one doesn't think of the Middle Ages, for in it is a figure of a weeping woman, and on the statue's base are inscribed the names of young men

fallen in 1870. Life becomes suddenly without reason.

At the station. *L'abri de bombardement pour permissionnaires* is in an old convent having a deep cellar, across the railway. We carry our own luggage, resembling almost any *poilu*, and with grateful hearts think of what we left behind.

Mont-sur-Meurthe. Flooding sun, many soldiers, no room in the train. The famous and now classic refrain, "*Faut pas s'en faire*," [1] floats about and makes one think how those who wait also serve, and in waiting learn patience, this new virtue of the Gaul. In regard to virtues, the French seem to have all those we thought they had, in addition to others we never suspected them of having.

A man completely bent with grief follows two men carrying a coffin. He himself carries a huge bead wreath, and his head is bared. Whatever his sorrow, it is gone out into the eternal, the immeasurable Wisdom, which I thought, in sudden fear, completely conceals that which it receives.

Dombasle, with its busy station and its great munitions-factories. Columns of smoke, from purest white to darkest brown, were rising to the shining heavens, and women in trousers, mothers and mothers-to-be, were going to work in the factories.

At Rosières immense camouflage works, and then the railway skirts the great canal. A thin, heavy-haired, very young girl is drawing a huge canal-boat. Her arms are crossed over her breast; above them is the broad band by which she tows that behemoth, a

[1] "*Faut pas s'en faire*" is one of the most famous phrases of the French army, and has been described as a combination of two slang expressions, "To keep your hair on, *de ne pas se faire des cheveux*," and "not to hurt your digestion by undue worry, *de ne pas se faire de la bile*."

thousand times her size. In accord with some law of matter it is just possible. One thinks of the building of the Pyramids, and of the unborn.

NANCY, *1.15.*

Lunching at the Café Stanislas and eating my fifth macaroon, "for remembrance." The gold guipure of the wrought-iron work makes the square seem to me like some lovely handkerchief thrown down as a challenge to memory. And I will *not* forget.

Later.

At the station, waiting for the train to pull out. An old man attended to our luggage; he liked his tip and became talkative as he straightened our impedimenta in the racks. Three sons killed in the war. Two at Verdun, the last and youngest at the Chemin des Dames this summer. His toothless old mouth trembled, and I thought to myself in sudden horror, "God, is *this* France?"

LIVERDUN, *3 o'clock.*

A vision of transfigured beauty in the afternoon light. Its high promontory aglow, every window a-dazzle. Its ancient walls, its old château, its church, all seemingly made of something pink, unsubstantial, shining. At the foot of the town flows the Moselle and there is a second shining moiré ribbon—the great canal leading from the Marne to the Rhine.

Toul. The gorgeous towers of the cathedral are a-shine, too, above the outline of the great barrack buildings. The vast station is a sea of blue-clad washing in and out of trains.

At Pagny we pick up the Meuse, *la Meuse aux lignes nonchalantes.*

At Sorcy, wide, shallow expanses of inundation, and reeds and trees grow out of shining spaces, and meadow-bounded flat horizons stretch away, and suddenly it

seems Oriental, Japanese, in the pink light — what you will—anything but a historic river of the European war, flowing through the elegant and sorrowful Lorraine.

And then we find ourselves at Gondrecourt in the tip of the acute angle, for still, to go the straight road between Nancy and Châlons, we would have to pass Commercy, daily bombarded by big German guns.

At Gondrecourt, about a dozen American soldiers standing on the platform, several seeming to have just left their mothers' knees. We wanted to speak to the nearest one, but feared we might represent *l'autre danger*. Great packing-boxes piled everywhere with "U. S. Army" stamped on them—and how fateful a destination is this little Lorraine town!

At Demanges-aux-Eaux more Americans. An old church, quite mauve, rises up seemingly from bronze waters, the houses of the surrounding village, blue and gray. Americans are billeted in these wide-doored Lorraine peasant houses, or in big stables whose entrances are high enough for great hay-wagons to pass through.

A talkative military person in the compartment with us. I thought at first he was a secret agent, he seemed to know so little about the country; then I realized that he was only rather stupid. And he had an uncontrollable provincial curiosity about small things, and was quite *intrigué* about his traveling companions, who seemed to know all the things he didn't know. He was *en permission*, coming from the forest of Parroy, the other side of Lunéville, where the French and Germans sit within a few yards of each other. He was quite uninteresting about it all, but it wasn't his fault, merely the way he was made. He showed me his map and the zigzagging German and French lines in the forest, and then I got suddenly bored and stood in the cor-

ridor, and watched the Meuse get pink and then purple and then a strange glinting black. Down the streets of little villages would come blue-clad men, smoking and talking, or getting water and stores for evening meals. And then the sun disappeared behind the yellow poplars, and a cold, clear night began to fall. Bridges were guarded by sentries with bayoneted rifles, and old men and women and children came in from dim beet-root fields, and more khaki-clad Americans were standing about village streets, or cycling in the dusk, behind reeds in water, and there were deepening forests, and black ridges against the last pale lemon glow, and then another little town, Laneuville, and two American patrols marching up and down with rifle on shoulder.

And the talkative officer, who had bought newspapers at Gondrecourt, tells of the pretty spy dancer, Mata Hari, shot that morning in the prison of Vincennes with warning pomp and circumstance, and of Bolo Pasha and *l'affaire Turmel*, but as soon as he touches a subject it loses all vestige of human interest.

"*Ce que nous avons vu d'Anglais parterre à Combes*," or, "*Qu'il faisait froid la nuit où nous cédions la ligne aux Anglais*," or, "*Je suis toujours là où on cède la ligne*, they say now the Americans will take the line at Parroy."

He has been through the whole war without a scratch —Verdun, the Somme, the Aisne—and now he spends cold, dark nights listening for Germans in the forest of Parroy, and it hasn't helped a bit; and he is one that will get through, when so much of wise and fair will have been gathered to the Lord. In an unwonted pause I asked him what he was in civil life, and he answered, "*Fabricant de brosses à dent.*" I know it's all right, and there must be tooth-brushes, but we had just come from gallooned generals, prefects, mayors, smart young aviators, and men living in the world of books.

Blue mists came up from the meadows and slipped between the hills, and everywhere black trees grew out of gold water.

LIGNY-EN-BARROIS.

The end of our line at the north, and there is a Gothic church of the thirteenth century called Notre Dame des Vertus, and in it is the tomb of the Maréchale de Luxembourg, dead in 1695.

NANÇOIS-TRONVILLE.

More blue meadow mists along gold waters, and soft dark fringes of willows.

LONGEVILLE.

The evening star and spirals of smoke from little houses, and blue-clad men melting into the twilight, and the canal a golden band, with stampings of deepest purple where tree shadows cut across it. Two American soldiers standing at a road-crossing looking up at the sign-post. Everywhere the Lorraine twilight is shot with khaki-colored threads from over the seas—and the three gray sisters spin the inexorable web.

Bar-le-Duc, looking sick and sorry for itself. Station full of broken glass, dirt, and piles of demolished masonry. The evening star hangs above the older town on the hill. No time to get out to see how the canteen work is going on; but two obliging station employees gave me news. A whole quarter of the town by the river, near the Hôtel du Commerce et de Metz, of unsanctified memory, was destroyed ten days ago, by an air raid.

I asked if anything had happened to the church of St.-Peter, for I thought of the *chef-d'œuvre* of Ligier Richier, René de Châlons,[1] standing in its dim space, holding his heart aloft in his left hand, eternal offering to his

[1] René de Châlons, Prince of Orange, killed in 1544, at the siege of St.-Dizier. The genius of Ligier Richier has represented him according to his wish, as his body might have appeared three years *after* death.

first wife, Louise of Lorraine. How his widow, Philippe de Gueldre, felt about this before she was laid out in the garb of the Poor Clares I don't know.

No longer any night work in the canteen, no lights being permitted. Our train unlighted, too. New and larger signs indicating cellars and shelters everywhere. Black moving shapes of *camions* along the road, and the evening star following us along the top of the hill of Bar. A squad of Annamites quitting their work on the road.

En ces armées singulières
Où l'Annam casse des pierres
Sur la route de Verdun.

REVIGNY.

Portentous dark shapes of roofless houses and detachments of blue-clad men going down a winding road, one with the blue twilight. The station dim, the town completely dark, and the vine-planted hills only soft masses; the evening star still following us, though she is so close to the ridge that in a few minutes she will drop behind it. Oh, this passing of the evening star in a war—autumn behind French hills!

VITRY-LE-FRANÇOIS, *5.45*.

Founded by François Premier near the old town which was burned with its church full of worshipers, in a fit of anger by Louis VII during his war with the Count of Champagne. To expiate this crime he undertook the Second Crusade. Much black ribbon of canal knotted about, one end of which leads from the heart of France to the Rhine. An endless train of troops going to the front, men pressed together, sardine- and herring-like, in each compartment—it made my soul sick—just human masses weighed down by accoutrement and literally wedged in. A lively dispute between a thick-set *poilu*

and one of the station employees on behalf of a slight, blond, very young soldier.

"*Quoi, vous osez engueuler un poilu de quinze ans?*"

And the following crescendo mounts to the broken panes of the station roof, "*Embusqué, cochon, salaud, vache!*" [1]

There was no answer of protest from the official. And Vitry-le-François is where Napoleon almost took prisoner the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and the Austrian General Schwarzenberg in 1814, and in 1914 it was bombarded by the Germans, and now American troops pour through it.

[1] Slacker, pig, dirty-one, cow!

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHÂLONS CANTEEN

HÔTEL DE LA HAUTE MÈRE DIEU, CHÂLONS, *October 17th, 1.30 a.m.*

LODGED at last with the "High Mother of God." On arriving, dined in a low-ceilinged, dingy, dowdy room, but the acetylene lights, the uniforms and decorations of the officers, made something brilliant, which half veiled the knowledge of the dark night outside, the approaching winter, the continuing war.

Afterward, I slipped out with my little electric lamp, through the Place de la République, almost empty; low and splendid stars hung over the town. In the rue des Lombards, St.-Alpin was a dark mass, and from its tower the hour was striking a quarter to nine o'clock.

I turned into the long, perfectly black rue de Marne. Not a single light, nor any passer-by. I flashed my little lamp to find the curb. There came a click of wooden-soled shoes from a side street, and a thick voice said, "*Ah, la dame, pourquoi si vite?*" I passed on like the wind, trembling, down the deserted street, but when I flashed the lamp to find another curb, something heavy and stumbling got nearer. And then I didn't dare to turn the light on, and I took the wrong turning, and found myself in what seemed a wilderness of mud and trees, with the click of those following wooden-soled feet behind, and any woman who has been terrified,

she scarcely knows why, will understand. Finally I stopped behind a dark mass of trees, with something sucking about in the mud, and mumbling half-suspected words, and finally retreating.

At that moment a soldier appeared, a gigantic shadow of himself as he struck a match to light his cigarette, and I asked:

"Is this the rue du Port de Marne?"

He answers, "You have missed your way; you are by the canal," and he puts me onto the road again, and then I turn and grope my way to the little house by the Marne.

Neither Miss Nott nor Miss Mitchell is there, so I depart again, going over the great Marne bridge to the station. Though I can see nothing, I hear the regular practised tread of a marching squad, and when I flash my lamp to find the curb, a little detachment looms up unmeasurably big and distorted, and the horizon blue becomes that ghostly gray.

In the canteen a thousand men at least. Am quite dazzled by the splendor of the installation. Warm welcome from Miss Nott and Miss Mitchell, with the light of a very understandable pride in their eyes. Go behind the long counter, then through the kitchen to the little dressing-room; take off my hat, put on a long apron, twist my pale-blue chiffon scarf about my head and am ready. As I look out over the big room I feel that in the whole world it is the only place to be. Around me surged those blue waves; the light caught helmets and drinking-cups; there was the mist of breath and smoke; the familiar sound of laughing, disputing, humming. That strange atmosphere of fatality hung over each and every one, yet with a merciless confusing of destinies in the extreme anonymity of it all.

Came away at 11.30 enveloped in a strange sidereal

light, the stars still more splendid as the night deepened. Even the memory of tropical constellations vaulting high altitudes was dimmed. The Great Bear lay over the left of the Marne bridge, and on the other horizon, over the Promenade du Jard, where I suddenly remembered that St.-Bernard had preached the crusade in presence of Pope Eugène and Charles VII, was Orion, so bright that he alone could have lighted the town of the Catalaunian fields, and Jupiter seemed like a distant sun, under the soft blur of the Pleiades. The river was mysterious, yet personal with its new mantle of history wrapping it sadly, yet tenderly, and with much glory.

Then I was again in the still, dark, long street; no passers-by, no lights from any window, the clock of St.-Alpin striking midnight, and Orion concealed to his belt by the houses of the Place de la République. There was some deep stirring of my heart as I turned in at the door of La Haute Mère Dieu, leaving the gorgeous heavens to stretch over the wide plain of Châlons, where the hosts of Attila were defeated, where the great, misty, tragic, glorious history of Champagne and Lorraine rolls itself out. Now above it all is the whir of *aeros de chasse*, and a faint, very faint booming of cannon. The Châlons plain continues to give me the "creeps." It is haunting and suggestive in the same way that the Roman Campagna is haunting and suggestive, though the great bare stretch, with its bald, chalky scarrings, its dull spots of pine woods, its dust or mud, has none of the material beauty of the Campagna. Doubtless I'm within the folds of the mantle of the concentrated, continuous human passions that cover it.

I trod as lightly as I could through a resounding corridor, having a profound regard for all sleeping things,

past many leather leggings and spurred boots outside of silent doors.

When I left the canteen, the guard, in answer to my cry, "Sentinelle!" said, as he opened the gate, "*Ce n'est pas comme à Verdun, où l'on ne passe pas*"; and then, "*Bonsoir, Mees.*" It was so easily and gracefully said in the inimitable French way.

October 17th, 7.30 a.m.

Tea, a lukewarm pale-gray beverage, with some still crisp leaves afloat on the top. I would have been ungrateful if I had not thought of the Hôtel des Vosges. Mrs. Church, fresh and strong as the morning, though just back from night shift, boiled some water for me and I blessed her. The bleakness of this room is indescribable. Two lithographs of the "*Angelus*" and "*Les Glaneurs*" but add to the desolation. A red-and-yellow striped paper on the walls; on the floor a worn square of Brussels carpet; brown woolen curtains; shutters with slats askew; a large mahogany chest of drawers; a grayish dimity cover to the feather bed, with machine-stitched *motifs* showing its ugly yellow case underneath; linen sheets, large, thick, and clean—and you have almost any room of La Haute Mère Dieu. Except Mrs. C.'s with its extraordinary bed, painted cream-color, having large "Empirish" corners formed by pale green and gilt Egyptian unduly voluptuous Sphinx-like figures, and a brownish-red plush baldaquin from which depend some yellowish-brown curtains; the brown carpet with purplish flowers is a protest between the two, and the rest of the room a riot of gilt mirrors. It's a room one couldn't forget, and why provincial hotels cling so to brown upholstery I don't know. They give the effect of being old and dirty even when they are—*perhaps*—new.

The corridor has been a sounding-board since dawn,

and all during the night *camions* were being driven over the cobblestones, and motor horns rent the darkness. My room looks out over an old garden. A tall, dead tree-trunk has immemorial ivy clinging to it, and there is an old round well, half covered, and beyond the gate, with ivy and moss-grown urns, is a street that would have been quiet except for the *camions;* and I can see a row of distinguished-looking, plain-façaded gray houses of another century, opposite.

The German General Staff was lodged here before the battle of the Marne, the chambermaid told me, with a reminiscential gleam in her eyes.

But you see how any one's personal history, his little wants, his little habits, are ground out into something quite different by the war-machine. The only thing any one asks is strength to get through what he has to do. He doesn't demand to get through in any special way—just get through—where so many don't. Not to be so cold that you can't use your hands or your mind, not to be so tired that you can't stand, not to be so hungry that you are faint and useless, not to go without sleep till you don't care what happens to anybody, especially yourself. Life is fairly simple, and somehow very satisfactory, on such a basis.

11.30 p.m.

A long day, with the exception of luncheon at the house on the Marne and a talk in the garden, where Mrs. Corbin and I sat for a while under the yellow chestnut-tree, looking out on the brimming, jade-colored, slow-flowing Marne, talking of destinies, and the illusion of free will, by which, however, all these high deeds which we witness are done. And it seems to me the thing called Destiny resides somewhere. It isn't a purely subjective affair, created out of the combination of qualities and opportunities of each, rather something

definite and operative and immutable; but that may only be the way I feel about it now. I am overcome all the time by the relativity of everything, even of truth.

The little white birch-tree has no leaves, the butterflies are gone, and winter is close upon the war-world. The gardener has been returned to his home. What of his sons, I wonder? He has a tender heart.

Miss Stanton lives in the little yellow room with the niche and the emanations. Now she looks out on yellowing trees; yellow pumpkins lie in the little wet garden; there is a border of yellow and red nasturtiums and dahlias. It's all like some stage-setting. When I said to her, "I hear you have the little room with the emanations," she answered, "There must be something about it; for in spite of the fact that I am not comfortable, I don't dislike it."

I wondered again what soul had inhabited within those four walls and if the niche had been an altar, and to what god, as I walked along in a sudden cold mist that began to envelope Châlons.

Since 10 o'clock.

I have been swept about by varying tides of blue-clad men. Some thought the *cantine épatante*, others thought sadly and remarked loudly that so much money being spent on an installation meant that the war was going to last indefinitely. "*C'est trop long*," one thin, blond man, with deep-set eyes and bright spots on his cheeks, kept repeating, till one of his friends in unrepeatable *poilu* terms told him to "leave the camp."

Concert in the afternoon, the usual number of extremely good *diseurs*. In the Salle de Récréation, where it was held, are reclining-chairs and writing-tables. When I told one not very young *poilu* that there *was*

such a heaven, he, too, answered, "*Alors la guerre va durer longtemps, si l'on fait tout cela pour ceux qui restent.*"

Lieutenant Tonzin has converted those old railway sheds into something most artistic. The walls are painted cream with strips of pale blue; conventionalized fruit-filled baskets and designs of flowery wreaths decorate them at intervals. The great roof has drapings of white muslin, and square, engarlanded shades make the light shine softly on the blue-clad men coming and going, coming and going.

On the counter are small green bushes. One homesick-eyed gardener *poilu* from Marseilles, having felt them, wondered what they would do if watered. "*Les pauvres! Chez nous sont grands comme ça,*" and he raised his hand toward the roof.

"*Toi, grand serin,*" remarked his comrade; "*tu vois tout toujours dix fois grandeur naturelle.*"

Whereupon they began the inevitable dispute. I heard the words "*gueuleton,*" "*qu'est-ce que t'as au bec,*" and the Marseillais finally calling out, as they retreated, that he thanked God *he* hadn't been born at Caen.

All is so orderly and the jokes mostly relatable. Only when they are somewhat *allumés* do they get on the subject of the eternal feminine, and then the dots are put on the i's, regarding her rôle on the natural plane. But even then there is generally some *copain* to say, "*Ferme ta gueule,*" or "*Que veux-tu que les mees sachent de tout cela?*" The legend being that the canteens are served almost exclusively by vestals.

When holding out their "quarts," they often ask, longingly, "*Pas de cogneau; pas de gniole?*" [1] When I answered once, "*Pas de pinard* [2] *ici,*" the *poilu* cried

[1] Cognac. [2] wine.

back, "*Mais le 'whisk'! Vous en avez toujours chez vous!*" Another delicate Anglo-Saxon reference.

Late, in between one of the train rushes, two men came in, violently disputing as they stood at the counter:

"*C'est une guerre diplomatique, je te dis, cochon, va.*"

"*Qu'est-ce que tu dis là, moi, je te dis, sale type, que c'est une guerre qui ne mène à rien!*"

"*C'est la même chose, nom de—— —nom ae —— —t'es bête, espèce d'acrobate,*" etc., etc.

Another comes in saying, loudly:

"*Cette sacrée guerre, cette sacrée guerre! Qu'est-ce que cela me fait que je sois boche ou Français? Suis de Roubaix, moi, il me faut manger du pain sec le reste de mes jours —moi et ma femme et mes cinq enfants.*"

When I gave him his cup of steaming *jus* (coffee), he poured into it, from his *bidon*, a few drops of *gniole*, and by the time he got to the door he was singing the well-known refrain:

Je fus vacciné,
Inoculé,
Quatr' fois piqué . . .

Then a train arrived, the great room was flooded again, and no time for anything except to ask, "*Avez-vous votre quart?*" (the tin cup) our bowls having given out during the rush; or, "*Prenez votre billet à la caisse,*" or, in order to relieve the congestion at *la caisse*, one takes their ten centimes and pours and pours and pours, or indicates the end of the counter, where the *repas complet*, consisting of soup, meat, vegetable, and salad, is served. *Boudin* with potatoes (a hundred yards of this dark "blood-sausage," curled up in boxes before being cooked, is an awful sight), or hash with potatoes, they love, but one and all hate macaroni with a deep hatred. Some-

times it is served when the potatoes give out, and they don't conceal their distaste. They get too much cold macaroni in the trenches.

It's always the ones who speak English who have the worst manners. One rather nice-looking individual came up to the *repas complet* counter, saying: "I'm in a 'urry. Got no waiters? Step live'." No *un*corrupted Frenchman, even half-seas over, would dream of such a form of address!

Lots of tiny, yellow Annamites in to-day, sounding just the way they look and looking just the way they sound. One brought back his salad-plate (accidents will happen in the best canteens) with a little worm a-move upon its edge, and he made some unintelligible sounds. When I thoughtlessly asked a *poilu* what he was saying, the *poilu*, quite unembarrassed, proceeded to tell me, but *I* can't tell *you!* It must go no further.

Lunched at the house by the Marne, where we talk American politics for a change, then back. One goes, one returns, and still they flood the vast room, and one continues the book of the *cantine*, bound in its horizon blue, with its blood-stained, tear-sealed pages.

A quite peculiar warming of the heart when one's own khaki-clad men come in. Early in the afternoon an American appeared at the counter, accompanied by a French corporal. He had completely forgotten the name of his town, was driving a *camion*, and said, with a distressed air, "If I could only find a certain spot in town, I *could* get back"; and then added, with a grin, "I suppose you think I'm like the doctor that could cure fits; but I've got to get the fits before I can do anything else, and I'm late already," he finished, anxiously. After giving various descriptions of various localities I hit on the Place de la République, "with a fountain with three women?" and as I explained to the

under-officer, he said, "You've saved little Willie's life," and hurried out.

The names seem the difficult part. One of them, when I asked where he was billeted, said:

"That's one on me; it's got three names; but"—and he beckoned to a *poilu* standing near—"this is a pal of mine. When I give him three knocks on the shoulder he gives the name."

The *poilu* didn't wait for even the first knock before he said, "Demanges-aux-Eaux," and then the American treated him to chocolate and offered him a "Lucky Strike" cigarette and began some exotic pronunciation of Demanges-aux-Eaux.

There's always one special thing in every situation in life that comes hard. Now I must confess that whenever I have to take a damp, dark-brown cloth in my hand and mop up puddles of spilled chocolate and coffee from the tiled counter, I feel an invincible repugnance. To-day four Americans came in together. A nice, tall, evidently perceptive one said, unexpectedly:

"Just give me that rag."

As I gratefully surrendered the clammy thing he continued:

"I will be here all the afternoon and you'll find me mopping any time you like." He subsequently ordered four fried eggs apiece for himself and a *poilu*, and then took a whole box of the little sweet round biscuits that we were selling rather gingerly by twos and threes, came back from time to time for bowls of chocolate, when he would cheerfully mop the counter for me. Finally I said:

"What is your name?"

And he answered: "Smith. There're a few of us," he added, and then with a twinkle, "but I'm John. Now what do you say to a swap?"

"I'm Mrs. O'Shaughnessy."

"I bet I spot you. I was in Mexico last summer. Say, wasn't your husband mixed up with old Huerta?"

I had to answer "yes" to this version of history.

"I wasn't much on dust when I was down there, but there's too much water here. However," he continued, cheerfully, "we've got to tin the Teut or he'll tin us." Then he added, in a confidential voice: "What do you think of the war? I get mixed sometimes."

I had noticed a small amethyst ring in the shape of a pansy on one of his large fingers as he was mopping, so, after disposing of his question in the briefest and most effective way by remarking that it was "up to us all" to do every bit we could to win the war, to which he agreed, I asked:

"Are you engaged?"

"To one beaut," he answered, without an instant's hesitation. "Met her in San Antonio last summer, but I guess she's the kind that waits. Gee! they were around her like flies, but I shoo'd 'em all off."

And he pulled out the picture of a girl with large dark eyes half hidden in love-locks, and showing a lot of white teeth between pleasure-ready lips. What appeared of her person was clad in the most "peek-a-boo" of blouses, and there was a twist of white tulle about it all. I wondered if she was the "kind that waits." I had a sudden affection for John Smith, thinking, however, as he passed out of the door, that his identification disk would be more definite than his name, and then, for an instant, I pondered on the supremely elemental thing he's come for.

Damp, cold night had fallen on Châlons, but the canteen was warm and cheery, and the men who knew little of warmth and cheer were sitting about in a moment's comfort, and there came to mind a canteen I know (oh, far away!) which is presided over by a lady

with a mustache like a majordomo, and there are no night hours in her canteen. She rings an inexorable bell at the chaste hour of 9.30, and, rainy or dry, warm or cold, out they go, the *poilus*. Some one with a compassionate heart remarked to one of the men on a pouring night, as the bell was ringing, "I am sorry you must go." He answered, with a glance at the ringer and a twist of *his* mustache: "It's well to choose them that way. It quiets us." And he went off singing, "*Depuis le jour où je me suis donnée.*" It was too funny. . . .

Friday, October 19th.

A tightening of the heart at leaving that flooding hall—going out again to pick up the personal life, inconsequential as it now seems. One is hypnotized by the stream of humanity, drawn into its vortex, finally rushing along with it, who knows whence or whither. I jerked myself back by saying, "This is not my bit," and, "Each one to his own." There are many ways of helping win the war.

I saw for a moment General Goïgoux, just back from his *permission*, so solicitous for the welfare of his men, so pleased with the results of the canteen, smiling as he said to me:

"*Eh bien, Madame, cela a fait des progrès depuis votre dernière visite.*"

There is a quite wonderful entente, and appreciation, on both sides in Châlons.

I went back into the canteen, and found some *poilus* in fits of laughter over a black cat. Now what a black cat evokes in the mind of the *poilu* I can only suspect; I don't quite know. Anyway, it's something that "makes to laugh"; and our black cat, strayed in weeks ago from who knows where, and perched near a devoted lady of unmistakable respectability, lately ar-

rived to help "save France," furthermore enveloped in a gray sweater (it's cold and draughty where she sits behind the small aperture selling tickets for coffee, chocolate, and *repas complets*), and not in her nature playful, seems somehow suggestive to the *poilu*. Even when it perches on the counter by the coffee-jugs it's the same. We don't like to get rid of it; it's supposed to bring good luck. However, enough, or perhaps too little, about the black cat.

There is a *surveillant* supposed to keep order. He is rarely needed, and if he does say anything, he gets an "*Embusqué!*" thrown at him, between the eyes. It's not the day of the civilian employee. This one spends a good deal of time eating and not paying, and nobody loves him. There is a favorite story of the *poilu* saluting a common or garden variety of policeman, thinking he was a corporal; and when telling of his mistake afterward he called it "*le plus malheureux jour de mavie.*"

A hitch in the serving of the *complete repasts*. I looked into the kitchen to see if things couldn't be hurried up. The group that met my eyes, of the cook and her assistant wrestling with yards of blood-sausage, could have been the female pendant to the Laocoön. It was awful. As I turned back to the counter I heard this bit of conversation between two *poilus* waiting for their meal:

"*Tu sais*, when a Canadian sees wood he goes wild. He'll chop up anything from a roadside cross to a baby-carriage. They say it is because of his forests. At —— last spring they took the balusters out of the house where they were quartered, and that pretty Jeanne you've heard about—*un amour, je te dis*—fell down in the dark and was killed."

"Each one has his *manie*," answered his friend, in perfect tolerance. "*Mais moi, je ne toucherais pas à*

une croix." And he proceeded to cross himself at the bare thought.

A colonel whose name I don't remember took me into the garden to see the kiosks that I had so often indicated when the men asked for *pinard* or *tabac.* The *guignol* that I had seen at the camouflage grounds in July was in place; beyond was the huge bomb-proof shelter built by German prisoners to contain 2,000 men in case of *avion* attack. We took a few steps into its black, moist intricacies. As I came up I found myself close to a group of some thirty German prisoners being marched past to work on a cement emplacement for a gun, the large P. G.[1] stamped on their backs, and wearing their small round caps with the red stripe, and any kind of clothes. I felt for a moment like an illustration for Cæsar's *Commentaries,* or some sort of a Roman watching northern prisoners being marched by.

The officer who showed me about was one of the twenty-seven men who escaped from the Fort de Vaux, and had lost his only child on Hill 304.

"I was wounded, and I'm not yet worth much, which is why I am here. My boy was only twenty-one—*mais c'était une personne faite*—a leader of men. All, with those qualities, go; I am not alone, alas! in my *douleur.*"

And that is one of the beautiful things of this sorrowful epoch. Each thinks upon the others' grief. . . . And then I left it all.

The jade-colored Marne is flat, eddyless, brimming over with its autumn rains, the reeds have disappeared, the trunks of the willows are hidden. Over the gray bridge flows, unabated, that other stream of war and life. *Camions,* ambulances, smart red-and-white-marked staff automobiles, soldiers in every conceivable state

[1] *Prisonnier de Guerre.*

of soul and body, "enduring their going hence even as their coming hither." English, Americans, Senegalese, Annamites—a dozen races swell this Gallic flood, and the Gray Sisters never so busy since the world began.

PARIS, *January 7th, 1918.*

I am waiting to know from one of the most charming of the sons of Gaul, who has promised to be my intercessor before the powers that be, whether I am to go to my front—our front—now or not. If, as Amiel says, "*Être prêt, c'est partir,*" then I am already off.

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